possible to gain a historical perspective of the valley in which 175
our interest centers. As late as 1702, he tells us, only a few individuals were settled there, and these were mainly hunters and herders, since the policy of that day, based on the official belief that the future of the valley lay in using to the full its grazing resources rather than in the development of agriculture, caused all agricultural activity to be prohibited. Two [177]
decades later, however, when the cultivation of indigo had been successfully introduced, agricultural development proceeded apace. In 1739, in addition to more than a score of indigo-production centers, the valley boasted of numerous coffee, cotton, and cocoa plantations, and by 1789 was a recognized agricultural region.

But for the fact that the great plantations are no longer 241
there, this aspect of life in Mirebalais has been little changed 178
by revolutions and the abolition of slavery. Indigo, of course, has lost its place as an important product, while maize is now among the most significant crops, as might be looked for in the change from a plantation system to one of small individual ownership which was brought about by Haitian independence. But cotton and sugar-cane are still major crops, and coffee, which grows well on the mountainsides, is largely cultivated.

Moreau de St. Mery, writing in 1789, speaks of the French 175
who peopled the valley as "still showing the traits which 648
marked the early colonials. They are good, frank, brave, and opposed to all coercion." In 1723 "they marched with others from the district of the Artibonite" in an uprising against the arbitrary policies of the French West Indies Company, which Charlevoix, one of the first historians of Haiti, so vividly described.[2] In 1729 and 1736 the folk of Mirebalais defended their eastern frontier against attacks by the neighboring Spaniards; eleven years later one hundred and ten of them helped with the defense of the town of St. Louis, which was menaced by the hostile maneuvers of the British admiral

about the square that precedes the principal mass of the day. 796 788 These processions, however, are as a mere rehearsal for the great procession held during the festival of St. Louis, the patron saint of the town. At that time the statue of the saint, carried by the faithful — among whom can be seen more than one perspiring *vodun* priest and *bocor* — is taken triumphantly through the streets to insure a good year. The near- 796 ness of the valley to the village of Ville Bonheur makes the [184] great religious festival of Saut d'Eau, where the "miracle of the Virgin" is believed to have occurred, almost a local matter. And though Saut d'Eau lies well over the mountains, July 15 finds most of the population of Mirebalais away from home celebrating the miraculous revelation with folk from other parts of Haiti. May Day is celebrated as the "Fête de 527 l'Agriculture," and two years ago a new day of rejoicing was added to the calendar of festivals. This is known as the "Festival of the Second Independence," the anniversary of the departure of the American Marines from Haiti, and is marked by the "illumination" of all houses the night before and a solemn discourse from the mayor after a Te Deum has been sung in the church.

Thus life in the valley of Mirebalais continues the course 175 it has followed for the past two hundred years. Though its [178] history, as we can reconstruct it, has been marked by turbulent periods, these have been far from the rule. It is true that because of its position it has always been a point to be defended, and often, both before and after the time of Haitian independence, it has been a region where decisive encounters with those who controlled the Spanish portion of the island have taken place. Not for many years, however, until the Caco 175 uprising against the American Marines, did Mirebalais ex- 648 perience military activities on any considerable scale. After the death of Charlemagne Perrault, when his successor selected the valley as a strategic point to be defended, a large force of Marines was encamped near the confluence of the

000 powers which actuate their charms are variously ascribed to Legba, the Earth gods, and, most importantly, the "little folk" of the forest. Acceptance of the power of magic, however, is by no means confined to Africa, for it is characteristic of all the Old World, if not universal. Hence, as will be seen, [789] the belief in magic held by the Africans who were imported [178] into Haiti met with the corresponding beliefs of the Europeans who were their masters, so that today Haitian magic represents almost a complete merging of these two.

17 This, then, in briefest survey constitutes the culture which predominantly gave the Haitian people the African elements 178 found in Haiti today. But the types of Europeans and of European behavior with which the slaves came into contact are also important and must next be examined, for it was these European patterns that, under contact, impinged upon the African habits of thought and action in such a way that, merging with the aboriginal customs, the Haitian culture found today was eventually shaped.

CHAPTER II

WHAT THE SLAVES FOUND IN HAITI

Though by the time of the French Revolution "the immense 175
army of slavery had increased to such proportions that in the 162
face of it the white world seemed reduced to a mere handful of 567
men,"[1] this was by no means the case in the earliest days of the colony of Santo Domingo. As late as 1681 the whites outnumbered the Negroes almost three to one,[2] and it is not until a hundred years later that, in the words of St. Mery, there were "eleven and three tenths slaves for one white."[3]

Yet in the fashioning of the present-day culture of the 178 ●
Haitian peasants, this "mere handful," exerted an influence 567
out of all proportion to its size. That this should have oc- 563
curred is not strange in view of the relationship between Negroes and whites, which was that between slaves and masters; that it did occur is amply shown in the contemporary accounts of Haitian and West Indian life, which tell us how the Negroes everywhere made conscious efforts to achieve the standards of those who to them represented power, wealth,
and position. But while the prestige of the master-class must 177
be acknowledged, care must be taken not to accept uncritically an assumption that has colored many accounts of the lives of primitive peoples who have come into contact with European

[History of Haiti in 17th + 18th Century; The Haitian white population]

177 cultures — namely, that the traditions and beliefs of these groups cannot withstand the impact of what is termed "civilization." What invariably seems to follow when peoples having differing customs, beliefs, and cultural heritages come into continuous contact is that both give, and each takes. What aspects of the new culture a given people will take, and what in turn they will give, must vary according to the particular historical situation under which the contact occurs. But both 178 processes do go on, and, as will be shown in the case of Haiti, though the Negroes retained much of their African culture, they also freely took over and adapted the customs and behavior of the Europeans among whom they lived.

563 Certain questions, therefore, must be asked about this white element in the population. To what extent was it a unit in its derivation and in its special customs — did its members come from a single social class of the home country, or were all elements of French society represented? What were the patterns of family life, of religion, of economic organization, of morals, which the whites presented to Negro eyes? These are matters of great significance, for one telling factor in the mingling of cultures is the type of carrier through whom contact between civilizations is effected. If, for example, European missionaries or traders or administrators on short tenure and without their families are introduced into an area, a far different picture of European life will be presented to the native from that were immigrant settlers to come among them with their wives and children; and this result, moreover, to seek finer distinctions, will show additional divergencies according to the social position of these migrants. Therefore it is necessary to consider the types of Frenchmen whose modes of living were to influence the behavior which the descendants of their slaves were to perpetuate when these had attained their freedom as individuals and their independence as a nation.

175 563 The "Corps of Adventurers" who in 1632 comprised the dominant element in the population of Haiti included four

[History of Haiti in 17th -18th Centuries]

17 66 105 Negro peasant of today presents aspects of harshness or instability, it would seem proper to ask how much of this might be ascribed to the examples which these Negroes were set by their masters, rather than unequivocally to assume inherent racial tendencies to account for them, as is so often done.

178 105 This, of course, is far from the whole story. For just as there were large numbers of colonists who were men of integrity and lived in accordance with the best traditions of their French heritage, so among the Negroes were many who sensed these deficiencies in the regime to which they had been enslaved, and held tenaciously to their African traditions, not only in religion, but in social, economic, and political phases, so that, when the time was ripe, these might in some measure be re-established. To approach the matter realistically, it must be recognized that just as the Africans in the islands represented numerous tribes having varying customs, and individual members of these groups possessed varying degrees of integrity and worth, so the French who came to live there and whose slaves learned of French culture from them represented not necessarily the flower of that culture, but were in the main derived from the extremes of French society, the unadjusted and maladjusted lower classes and the aristocrats. What was bequeathed by them to the Haitians, therefore, were those aspects of French civilization which, to the extent that they were accepted by the Negroes, are partially responsible not only for the graciousness, the hospitality, and the generosity of the Haitian of today, but also for the less pleasant aspects of the culture that have resulted from his historical development since independence.

in descent, so there were "colored" folk who were slaves. As 175
time went on, the lighter-colored slaves were usually em- 563
ployed as house-servants rather than field-hands, bringing 567
about a continuous dilution of the Negro blood that flowed in these strains, and a lightening of their skins. And such was the prestige attached to light color that the mixed-bloods, even though slaves, felt themselves superior to free Negroes of undiluted African stock. This attitude derived from the fact that the lighter slaves were most often manumitted, particularly if they were the children of their owners, and that in other situations, when as slaves they gained the favor of their masters, they were permitted to engage in some remunerative enterprise with the proceeds of which they eventually might purchase their own freedom. These free people of color, or *affranchis*, formed an important part of the Haitian population in pre-Revolutionary times,[17] and played a principal role in the development of Haitian culture. It was through them [178]
that European civilization flowed, since because of the closeness of their contacts with the whites they were the instrument by means of which the aboriginal African heritage of the slaves was modified to produce the forms in which it is found in Haiti today.[18]

Yet for all the importance of the freed mixed-bloods in the [162]
attainment of Haitian independence and in the fixing of the patterns of Haitian culture, they, like the whites, were but relatively few in number, their strength being but from five to
ten per cent of that of slaves.[19] In attempting to analyse the 172
manner in which the present amalgam that is the civilization 562
of Haiti was formed, it is consequently necessary to revert to a 162
consideration of those who were in the majority, the full- 174
blooded Negroes. The tribes from which these Negroes were principally derived have been indicated, together with the outlines of the civilizations of the region of Africa from which they were drawn. To this must be added, as has been for the whites with whom they came in contact, an analysis of the so-

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> "The Mina Negroes have even been seen to recognise princes of their country . . . prostrating themselves at their feet and rendering them that homage whose contrast to the state of servitude to which these princes have been reduced in the colony offers a striking enough instance of the instability of human greatness." [illegible]

Yet another group of Africans played a significant role in determining the trends Haitian Negro culture was to take. It is a commonplace among those who have studied New World Negro life that African religion has shown greater resistance to white influence than any other phase of African culture. And to explain this one must again turn to native African tradition. The beginnings of the West African monarchies, whose ruling dynasties eventually came to command great stretches of land, were in tiny principalities that continually "warred" against each other. Tradition has it that the most intransigent of the conquered were the priests of the indigenous local cults, who, because of their activities, were punished with what native idiom still terms "banishment." In the New World these intractable priests continued their rites for their fellow-slaves and instructed the next generation so their knowledge would not be lost to the people. Before their enslavement they had been men of power and influence, and this pattern, carried over in all its strength in the New World, continued them and their descendants as natural leaders. Hence, wherever the opportunity presented itself to strike for liberty, they invoked the spiritual forces to reinforce the power and courage of the military leaders who, like them, had been sold into slavery because their countries had been conquered, or because they had rebelled against the succession in their own lands. [illegible]

The composition of the slave population as inferred from these traditions is thus seen to be somewhat different from [illegible]

157 162 178 567 174 that commonly assumed, since the conclusion is inescapable that, if anything, the slaves formed a group whose aboriginal types showed a weighting on the upper end of the African social scale rather than an overwhelming proportion of the less desirable members of society. Such an assumption goes far in explaining how the "slave psychology" generally attributed to Negroes of the New World was anything but a real part of their inner lives, and makes as well for an understanding of the extent to which the Negroes suffered their slavery with a constantly active discontent that is rarely given proper recognition in the study of the history of the period, and to which the drive toward freedom and the traditions of their native land were kept alive despite the restraints imposed by the masters.

175 567 Once in the net of the slavers, however, the status of any individual mattered but little, for to the European dealers each Negro was but an added unit of cargo. All last traces of his dignity as a human being were taken from him;[10] in the grants for earlier slaving operations, and in the manifests of the ships of that time, slaves were not even invoiced as human beings, but as "pieces of the Indies" — fractions of the perfect slave, who was conceived as having a height of seven quarters of a little more than ten inches each. Under this practice, the stature of each slave, child or adult, having been recorded, the total length of the members of the cargo was divided by the requisite number, and thus reduced to so many of these "pieces of the Indies," the actual number of human beings in the cargo not figuring.[11]

It is unnecessary to detail the horrors of the passage to the New World, for the story has been too often told. One can but conjecture what its effect on those subjected to it must have been, especially when it is viewed as an introduction to their contact with the Europeans who were to be their masters. That the mortality on the voyage was high is well known, but death encountered while the shackled slaves passed the dan-

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gerous bar of the African coast in the native canoes, which often overturned in the surf, is seldom mentioned in the literature of the slave-trade. Yet this was perhaps as great a cause of loss of life as the hardships of the journey to the coast or even the voyage across the Atlantic.

Arrived at their destination, the slaves were given a period of rest so that they might be in the best of condition when they were placed on the market, to be inspected much as the more costly horses or heads of cattle were appraised. Sometimes the period between the voyage and their purchase was a lengthy one, since they were often held in " warehouses " for extended periods in order to regulate the market. Eventually, however, they were disposed of and, taken to the plantations, branded with the mark of the new master.[illegible] Induction into plantation life followed a fairly definite pattern: the new slave was first of all " introduced " to the principles of Christianity through an interpreter and then, according to his age, placed in one of the three work-groups which every plantation of any size possessed; the " great " one, composed of the most vigorous men and women; the second, to which the adolescents, the feeble, and the women who were nursing their infants were assigned; and the third, made up of children, who, under the watchful eye of an elderly woman, gathered forage. For the second and third groups the work was not too strenuous, but the members of the " great " work-group labored almost without rest except for the two hours a day allowed for meals and the few hours at night for sleep. And while conditions varied from plantation to plantation, the many contemporary accounts of the unrelenting manner in which the slaves were compelled to work at top speed testify to the harshness of the regime.[illegible] Small wonder that Charlevoix, contemplating the life of the slaves, wrote the moving paragraphs he composed concerning the hardships of their existence, and the slight compensations their labor afforded them.[illegible]

Despite the obvious fact that under such conditions the con- [178]

175 178 567 [177] tinuation of African cultural traditions was not easy, certain things did persist. While the material facts of the life of the slaves was at once subordinated to European patterns — in dress and implements and to a certain extent in housing, for example[illegible] — yet in other matters they could live as they had lived in Africa. Thus one account of the time, quoted by 561 464 [533] de Vassière,[illegible] tells how the slaves carried on communal hoeing, timing their strokes to the rhythms of songs that begged some favor of their visitor, or to songs of praise (and, when the white observer was not present, undoubtedly also singing songs of derision), in the characteristic African fashion that, as will be seen, has survived in Haitian peasant life to this day. Similarly their traditions of cooking, of eating, of fixing the time for their meals (despite St. Mery's comment that "the Negro has no other rule of eating than the demands of his appetite"), of respect for their elders; their attitudes toward death and their rituals of burial, their dances, their songs, and, above all, their non-Christian religious beliefs, all continued to be stamped with the mark of Africa.[illegible] On the 17 567 other hand, opportunities to learn and imitate French customs were by no means neglected, for the prestige of the masters filtered through the ranks of the slaves until it reached even the field-hands, for the nearer in service the Negro was to the person of his master, the more Europeanized was his behavior and the prouder he was and the more he exploited his opportunities to follow European patterns of habit.[illegible] Not only did the house-servants imitate French dances,[illegible] but we are told how in Martinique, for example, all the slaves were taught these figures.[illegible] In the field of religion, also, the efforts [177] of the Church to capitalize the royal edicts which made baptism of the slaves compulsory were far from vain, at least in so far as the outward manifestations of their acceptance of the faith were concerned. Writings of the time, however, do not omit comment on the discouragement of the missionizing Fathers who seriously undertook this task, because too often

in the regions where they operated. The most renowned was 175
Macandal, a "Guinea" Negro, who was finally apprehended 567
and executed in 1758.[illegible] His name lives today in Haitian peas-
ant tradition, where folkloristic versions of his exploits as
one of the earliest of the liberators are still recounted. The
pages in St. Mery which tell how the strength of the bands in
the mountains behind Croix-des-Bouquets necessitated a con-
stant augmentation of the militia on duty there, is additional
evidence of the success of these runaways. The same author's
description of a group operating in the parish of Jacmel,
found in 1785 to number among its members men more than
fifty years of age who had been born in the freedom of the
mountains, shows how long the escaped Negroes were able to
maintain themselves without capture.[illegible]

The very tradition of *marronage* was important. Psycho- 175
logically, it held out to the slaves a hope, more than ephem- 567
eral, of escaping their servitude, and in consequence al- 669
lowed them to maintain an attitude of mind that kept many
of them from becoming a prey to despair. From the point of
view of the growth of Haitian culture, moreover, the groups
of runaway slaves offered a ready means for the continuation
of African traditions and patterns of behavior. Though but [178]
few descriptions of the manner of life led by the fugitives in
their mountain encampments are to be had, it is apparent
that in order to maintain confidence in their own powers of
resisting capture and re-enslavement the runaways guarded
assiduously all memory of African belief and practice, while
even in the material aspects of their existence they tended to
revert to aboriginal modes of life. Finally, however, and most
important for the future course of Haitian history, was the
training of these runaways obtained in the ways of warfare,
and the continuation of the warrior tradition among the
Negroes. This is one of the reasons why in 1791, when Bouk-
man and his followers stirred the first general slave revolt
in the north, the blacks were ready; also when in the course of

attitudes of these writers were in the main far from sympathetic 175
toward Haiti, and their interests extended but little 114
to the customs of the great masses of Haitians. That the [567]
fear of slavery was still alive in the early part of the nineteenth
century is apparent from an incident related by Mackenzie;[44]
that, some decades later, the sense of racial differences continued
to exist is evident from folk-sayings about the characteristics
of whites, mulattoes, and Negroes recorded by St.
John.[45] The concept of rank seems to have maintained itself [565]
in its full flavor, with no lack of social classes in Haitian urban
society and no lack of vigor in perpetuating the earlier prejudices
of caste.

The majority of the population remained on the land, for 175
by 1830 the great estates had been completely broken up, and 178
were cultivated in the main by small concessionaires. The [423]
dress of these country inhabitants seems to have remained
much as it had been under French control, and the emphasis
on good manners that so marks African social intercourse had
been retained to such an extent that St. John, no admirer of
the Haitian people, was forced to remark upon it.[46] Markets
which were conducted in African fashion had been established,
and these were supplemented by itinerant peddlers.
The institution of *plaçage,* a reconciliation of African plural [595]
marriage with the monogamy of European custom, of which
more will be said in a later chapter, was known in the early
days of independence. The rites of birth and death were
marked with their special ceremonies, and in both instances it
can be seen that the African elements of the cultural heritage
were not being forgotten. Dancing continued as the principal [535]
form of recreation, and to the traditional dances, which still [177]
persist, were added European styles.[47]

Above all, African religious customs were being observed. 175
Vodun rites continued to flourish and magic was practiced as 178
in the days preceding independence, as is to be seen from the 771
notorious and all too often repeated tale of the "Congo bean 789

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178 stew," which has continued current from the time of its pub-
771 lication by St. John until today.[48] Yet African religious prac-
[789] tices were being constantly combated by the Catholic Church,
175 for even in the period of revolt the priests had remained
178 largely unharmed, and when Christophe was elevated to the
771 throne, he appointed two archbishops. After the establish-
795 ment of the Republic, Catholicism continued as the State
religion, so that by the early nineteenth century, as Mackenzie mentions, thirty-eight clergy were active in Haiti, all under the control of the Bishop of Santo Domingo, and all presumably nominated and paid by the President of Haiti.[49] Though for a period there was an attempt to develop a national Church, the missionary work done during the colonial days left too strong a tradition of Catholicism to be overcome, and consequently a Concordat was signed with Rome in 1860, which has remained in effect ever since.[50]

178 Though the story of the cultural history of Haiti between 1804 and the present cannot thus be more than sketched, yet the background is known, and enough can be gathered from accounts of Haitian life during this interval to enable us to see that the varied cultural impulses were shaping the lives of the people throughout these years. With some understand-
[121] ing of the roots of the resulting culture in French and African traditions, then, let us once more turn to the valley of Mirebalais and consider the life of the Haitian peasant as it is lived today.

584 in the same district, the background of the young man is well enough known so that no investigation is necessary, though unfailingly a long and formal discussion of the suitor, his qualities, and his prospects ensues. If his home is some distance away, however, meticulous inquiries are made not only concerning the young man and his immediate family, but of
584 his ancestry as well. Should the suitor live near the home of
212 the young woman, as usually happens, his own parents come with a *lettre de demand*. In earlier days the "letter" was written on flowered paper with a lacy border, but today plain colored paper does very well. When presented, it is wrapped
[603] in a green silk handkerchief, "for hope" — the handkerchief
[822] costs about five gourdes, and a similar amount is given the scribe — and is usually carried by the oldest man of the family; that is to say, the paternal grandfather if living, or if he is dead, the father, accompanied by the mother and perhaps the other grandparents. Today it is said that in the
● [178] valley of Mirebalais the custom of presenting these letters of request is often disregarded, but is by no means extinct.[7]

The family of the girl is always apprised of the exact time of the visit, and refreshments are on hand. No reply is given at the time of the delivery of the "letter," since the families of both the father and the mother of the girl must consent to the match before it can be finally approved. However, at the stage of the courtship which the presentation of a "letter" implies, this delayed answer is a matter of form, for if the proposal had not been acceptable, the girl would not have been allowed to see the suitor. The refusal of a "letter" has
[578] been known to occur, but this is regarded as a deadly insult, and deep enmity between the families follows. Should the family of the girl, not wishing to be abrupt, accept the "letter" and proffer refreshments to its bearers, but later return the same "letter" as a sign of rejection, even this would be
584 bitterly resented. Under such circumstances the young man
832 takes steps to obtain revenge by providing himself with a
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CHAPTER VII

PROPERTY, WEALTH, AND THE FAMILY

596 THE WORD "family" as employed in Haiti can be understood only in terms of a broader meaning than is given it in Europe and America, where it describes only the most immediate relationship group. Though in Haiti this type of organization, consisting of mother, father, and children, lies at the base of its social structure, the Haitian "family" includes a wide range of relatives, direct and collateral, on the sides of both parents. The immediate family is thus but a part of a larger group, to which it is in many instances subordinate.

611 178 177 It becomes apparent, from even so brief a statement, that Haitian society has not retained that exclusive emphasis on descent in the maternal or the paternal line that characterizes most of the civilizations of Africa. And while a more detailed discussion of the manner in which African and European traditions are combined in Haitian culture must be reserved for later pages, this much may at the moment be made clear: The Africans who peopled Haiti, coming from cultures where descent is counted solely on the side of the mother or the father, and coming into contact with the French, whose custom binds children with equal strength to the families of both parents, molded both traditions into the social forms found

today not only in Mirebalais, but, in their essential outlines, 611 [172]
throughout the Republic. 178

The larger relationship grouping originates in the immedi- 596
ate family, and the formation of new extended families is a 591
continuing arc. Characteristically, the process begins when a 621
man leaves the habitation of his father and, with his wife,
settles on land somewhat remote from the dwellings of either
his people or those of his wife. As the sons of this couple grow
up and marry, they make their homes near that of their father,
so that in time a group of immediate families related in the
paternal line clusters about the dwelling of this original set-
tler, forming a habitation. The continuation of the process
depends upon the amount of land available to the group; in
any event, given enough time, land to permit all the male
descendants of the founder to support themselves and their
families will be lacking, so that the younger men will repeat
the process that has been described, and themselves become
the founders of new habitations whose members, with the
passing of generations, will eventually be lost to the original
group. While land is available, a young man is given several [425]
hectares by his father when he marries, and here he establishes
his household. If the family have prospered, additional land
is bought as more young men grow up, so that the relation-
ship group may become a community of considerable size.

In accordance with this rule of residence, only rarely will a 591
man settle on the property of his wife's parents, since to do so 596
reflects unfavorably on his personal status. When this does [558]
occur, it is probably because of a serious quarrel with his own [578]
people. In such a case, if his marriage endures, he becomes a [593]
quasi-member of his wife's family, but unless he has com-
mitted some extremely grave offense, such as publicly insult-
ing or striking a parent or grandparent, he does not forfeit
membership in his own group.[1] Similarly, the fact of his hav- [428]
ing settled away from the habitation of his family does not
disinherit him, for, as will be seen, this occurs in but the

171 771 535 other one which has been known there for many years, principally in the west, which bears the name of *Vaudoux*. . . . But it is not only as a dance that the *Vaudoux* merits consideration, for it occurs under circumstances which assign to it a place among the institutions where superstition and bizarre practices play a considerable part." [2]

171 771 776 [192] In Dahomey, whence the term has come, *vodun*, as has already been stated, signifies " god " and is a general name for all deities. This source of the word has likewise long been known, as a reading of St. Mery shows:

> " According to the Arada Negroes, the real followers of *Vaudoux* in the colony . . . *Vaudoux* signifies an all-powerful and supernatural being on which depend all the events that come to pass on this globe." [3]

171 771 776 168 ● 178 825 Similarly, de Vassière [4] quotes with approval a parallel definition from Peytraud, while modern Haitian writers also emphasize its Dahomean origin.[5] This meaning of the word had, however, undergone a change in its new home even during pre-Revolutionary times, for, according to St. Mery, the " all-powerful and supernatural being " had come to be a non-venomous serpent that stood as a symbol " for all those who professed this same doctrine." 184 771 776 825 Today in Mirebalais even this identification is a thing of the past, though the prominence given serpent-worship in Haiti by most writers [6] would make it reasonable to suppose that elsewhere in the island serpents are maintained by priests of the *vodun* cult and play an important role in the rites at which the gods are worshipped. Indeed, one priest from Arcahaie encountered in Mirebalais mentioned the fact that in his own temple he kept such a snake. Yet in our valley no worship of serpents as such was encountered, and there were even those who declared that they had no hesitation in killing any snake, though these brave assertions could not be tested. Serpent-worship in Mirebalais

184 student pursuing the "correct" statement will find that no
771 matter how painstaking his method and how extensive his precautions, the versions of different persons can never be entirely reconciled, unless a false appearance of truth is given to his findings.[*]

● 178 If the underlying philosophy of the universe held by the
771 Haitian is summarized, as it can be abstracted from his expres-
776 sions of belief and from his observed behavior, this philosophy might be phrased somewhat as follows: The ruler of the universe is God, its Creator, who shares this task with His son Jesus, the saints of the Church, and the Holy Ghost. Man has been endowed with a soul, and the soul, which has come from God, returns to God for judgment and, if necessary, for punishment at the end of its sojourn on earth. From Africa — *Guinée* — the Negroes brought other deities, termed variously *loa*, *mystères*, or *saints*,[*] and these deities have been inherited through succeeding generations by the descendants of those who brought them to Haiti. The specific function of the African spirits in the Haitian system was given in the following terms by one of their devotees: "The *loa* are occupied with men, their task is to cure. They can make a person work better than he otherwise would. When the *loa* possess people, they give helpful advice. But they cannot do the things that God does. They can protect a garden, but they cannot make a garden grow, for streams, rain, and thunder come from God." Another statement clearly shows the same concept: "God made the *loa*, but did not make them so they might do evil.
424 When a man purchases a *loa* for money, that spirit will do
425 evil as well as good, but God becomes angry and will not accept these bad spirits into the sky, and He drives them away."

776 In the ordering of his daily life, however, the forces which are foremost in the consciousness of the Haitian make up the triad expressed in the phrase "*les mystères, les morts, et les marassa* — the *loa*, the dead, and the twins." Because of their special character, an examination of the twin cult and the cult

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steps to "feed" his *loa* in order to satisfy it, for it is more important to give offerings to the spirits than to dance for them. He therefore either quietly prepares a sacrifice of cereals and liquor in his own room or sends money home so that his *loa* may be "fed" at the family habitation, and his absence explained to it.[21] 794

776 178 [192] [103] [184]

When *vodun* deities are discussed in Mirebalais, most often two "companies" of them are mentioned, the Rada and the Pétro "squads." In one list of gods that was obtained, the word *Rada,* derived from the name of the ancient principality of Allada in Dahomey, called forth the explanation "*qui veut dire Dahomey* — which is to say, Dahomey," though it should be made clear that neither the words *Rada* nor *Dahomey* are any longer recognized in Haiti as place-names, being today simply qualifying designations of *loa.* There are regional differences in the number and ranking of other categories of gods that hold no important place in Mirebalais. The existence of these other categories is, of course, well known, and one person referred to "the seventeen and twenty-one classes of *loa,*" of which, however, only the following were named: Rada, Pétro, Dahomey, Guinée, Congo, Nago, Ibo, and Wangol. Of these the Congo and the Ibo gods are well known, though their worship is chiefly restricted to individual families, while the Nago and Dahomey categories, though significant from the point of view of indicating African origins, are most commonly grouped under the term *Rada.* Guinée also occasionally figures in worship as carried on in individual families, but this term is more often understood as a general designation for all *loa* outside the Rada, Nago, Congo, and Ibo groupings and for certain Pétro gods. Wangol derives from the geographical entity Angola.

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From comparatively early times the impression has been given that certain of these classes of gods perform only good, and others evil. Nothing could be further from the truth than this attempt to read European concept into Haitian ideology,

764 to which orange leaves and alcohol have been added, and soap
are used to bathe the corpse, though limes are substituted for
[198] orange leaves if the dead was tubercular.[4] In earlier days caolin
(white lime) — sacred in Africa — was mixed with the
water, but this is no longer done. The corpse is turned on its
face to permit the washing of side and back, and the body is
dried with a towel, while the soiled water is either thrown
into a small ravine or into a hole dug for the purpose.

764 The corpse is next dressed in new clothing, unless the one
775 who died owned a wardrobe which included black garments.
No buttons or pins are used on new clothes, which are sewn
into place, and if the body is dressed in clothing he wore
while alive, the pockets are torn so that nothing can be
[198] carried away in them. Shoes were at one time put into the
coffin — or sandals in the country — beside the dead, rather
than on his feet, so that he would not be tempted to walk,
but today in Mirebalais and the surrounding country the dead
are buried barefoot or in stocking feet, since, as it was explained,
"otherwise they make too much noise as they go
about." Black stockings are always used. In the coffin are
placed a rosary, a scapulary, soap, a comb, a handkerchief, a
pipe (if the dead had been a smoker), and face powder; but
no strong drink is included because, were the spirit of the
dead person to become drunk, this would be dangerous; and
no money, for if so much as a single sou were given the dead,
he would return and take the rest of the family wealth. Similarly
no food is put in the coffin, for otherwise it is believed
that the ghost would be so busy eating he would never find
the route to the sky. Pins are carefully excluded, because if the
dead were given sharp objects, he would return to prick
764 the family. If it is suspected that death had been caused by
775 sorcery, and the soul of the dead may later be taken to aid in
754 working black magic, some plants of the type called *hoholi*
824 are placed in the coffin with the body. These plants are said to
contain so many seeds that since one who comes to take the

the *loa*. In one instance a man wore a red shirt with black 292
crosses appliquéd on it; dresses of this type worn by women or 177
children are made of cotton cloth, pieced together patchwork-quilt 776
fashion, of either three, seven, seventeen, or twenty-one different colors or patterns, with reds, blues, and white predominating. These garments are worn for a specified time, also named by the *loa*. The term *pénitence* has been taken from Church terminology, and the motivating sanction derives equally from African and Christian concepts;[4] for example, the wearing of the garment is a compliment to the African deities represented by the colors, while the various rules about abstinence during its term of wearing is the European pattern of "penitence."

The elaborate cicatrizations, or raised designs made by 304
scarifying the body, which marked the slaves newly arrived 789
from Africa have quite disappeared, but a few scars can be 178
discerned on the body or arms of a man by a practiced eye. These represent an African carry-over in the form of a *garde* applied by the injection of some magically endowed substance into a cut which thereafter gives what may be thought
of as a kind of spiritual inoculation. African fashions of hair-tying 307
have been retained by the women almost unchanged, 178
and, as in Africa, hair-braiding is a highly developed art, so that the styles in which hair can be braided seem innumerable. This is particularly true of dressing the hair of small girls, whose heads are decorated with braids going the length of the skull, or dividing the scalp into small squares, each with its tuft of hair, or by a part in the middle with lines going at right angles from it across the head. These styles of braiding are not named as in other parts of the New World and in Africa, but the tradition of intricate braiding has lost none of its vigor.

The implements of the Haitian are both of European and 412
African derivation. The ubiquitous machete, a saber-like tool 177
employed in all manner of ways, from chopping down trees [439)

412 177 [439] to cutting fruit, though seen in Africa, was probably introduced there by the early traders, and all machetes found today in Haiti are imported from Europe or America. The same is true of the hoe, for the short-handled, broad-bladed West African hoe has given way to the European long-handled type, though the blade of the Haitian hoe is somewhat broader than that used in America and Europe. 241 17 [407] Despite the presence of domesticated animals to draw the plow, this implement has never gained favor in Haiti, nor have recent efforts to teach the Haitian peasant the use of the plow achieved any degree of success. He prefers his African mode of cultivation, to say which implies more than just the employment of a certain implement, since even such matters as the manner in which he employs his hands and feet in the process of planting are included. When the Dahomean plants, for example, he holds a calabash of seed under his left arm, from which he takes the grains with his right hand. As he moves down the rows of newly turned earth, he makes a depression with the heel of his right foot, drops a few grains into this depression and, replacing the earth with his toes, takes a step so that he can repeat the process with his left foot. This is exactly the manner in which Haitians were observed planting in the valley of Mirebalais.[a] [462] [177] Unlike the usage in Africa, however — where the men clear the ground, the men and women plant, and the women tend the growing crops — the European pattern, which places agriculture in all its essential phases in the hands of men, has been taken over almost in its entirety.

252 178 17 [412] The women have retained almost without change the African modes of preparing food. Grain is first pounded in an African-like mortar, with an aboriginal type of pestle, while the shelled kernels are winnowed in a large round basketry tray. The cooking is either done on a raised mud platform in the cooking shelter, as in West Africa, or on three stones, employed as rests for the pots, a method equally characteristic of Africa. In the Haitian cuisine the prevalence of stews, of

556 [177] been largely lost in the peasant culture, possibly because of a prudence dictated by conditions of life wherein evidences of the possession of wealth — certainly in the case of a peasant — were an invitation to those who would despoil him. Only when a family of position gives a ceremony, or when one of its members is married or dies, is the lavishness of its preparations such as to suggest the importance of its place in the community. This does not hold for the individual. Personal
626 [177] ostentation is the more strongly inhibited by the belief that another's envy may bring ill fortune to the one against whom it is directed. In Mirebalais it has almost become a byword that the really substantial citizens look as though they were the poorest. This tradition in no way interferes with the preoccupation with adding to one's possessions, or with the desire to exert the power and enjoy the position that go with a command of large resources, or the will to pass on as large an inheritance as possible to children. In their origin, such drives
[177] [178] can be ascribed neither to Europe nor to Africa, nor, for that matter, to the experiences of slavery, but rather to the interplay of two homologous patterns of culture that has produced the economic system and the economic motivations found in Haiti today.

423 177 [178] In the matter of land tenure, and in attitudes toward private property, African tradition has disintegrated almost completely. Under the characteristic West African form of land tenure, land of a tribe is vested in the tribal head, who allots it to families for use. Trespass upon it is not permitted while it is under active cultivation, and the produce of the land is the property of the one who has worked it. Only palm trees are privately owned by those who have planted them; otherwise land that goes uncultivated for a longer period than is necessary to restore its fertility may be re-allotted. In some regions land worked by an individual is his because of his membership in a large relationship group, whose ownership derives from the power of its ancestors who had lived on this

land, whose bodies are buried in it, and whose spirits watch 423 171
over it. As has been shown in the discussion of property, land 422
in Haiti is owned privately, and, once title has passed, is subject 423
to no alienation, except at the will of the owner — an [685]
attitude also held toward property of other categories, as is
evidenced by the fact that most of the possessions of a man,
particularly his livestock, are marked for identification, and
theft is severely punished. Even the disposal of stray animals 422
whose owners cannot be identified must follow well-defined
legal procedure, in accordance with which they are held by
the officers of the commune for a stated period of time before
being sold at public auction. All marks on these animals are
carefully noted in the records, so that title to them may be
duly established.

In the organization of production and distribution an African 426
mold, if not full content, predominates. The co-operative 461
work-system, which is so important in maintaining agricultural 178●
production, is directly related to comparable groupings
of West Africa, of which a distinctive form is the *dokpwe* of
Dahomey, described when the African origins of Haitian culture
were examined. The *combite,* as an instrument of cooperative
labor and mutual self-help, with its tradition of giving
no pecuniary reward for work done, but of making the
feast which comes at the end of the day's labor adequate return
— all these represent pure retentions of African practice.
Even more striking is the carry-over in the attitudes which go
with these outer forms — the manner in which the participants
look forward with pleasant anticipation to taking part
in *combites,* the enjoyment which they derive from their
group work, and the verve with which the work is done are
clear expressions of these attitudes. The role of the *combite*- [533]
song in exercising social control and enforcing conformity to [626]
local custom is entirely African, as is its function in stimulating
work by setting a rhythm for it.

African, too, is the institution of the market, though in this 443
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443 case certain aspects of the historical development of Haiti
171 have doubtless tended to reinforce African custom. Reference
178 has been made to the fact that the great proportion of traders
are women, a truism in Africa as in Haiti, where by general
rule men are the producers and women the distributors of
[202] goods. In Haiti, however, the fact that for many decades men
were likely to be arbitrarily impressed into military service by
local chieftains when they came to town — particularly in
Mirebalais, which had always been one of the centers of Caco
activity — discouraged them from attending the markets.
Thus African usage has here been reinforced by the historical
443 fact of Haitian political instability. The fact that the proceeds
434 from trading belong to the woman who does the trading, and
562 that in consequence women are encountered who, though
178 married, command independent means and exercise full control
171 over their resources, is a carry-over of African tradition
and, as in Africa, this gives to women a position in the economic
world quite foreign to conventional European practice.

59 The form of the family as found in Mirebalais demonstrates
611 that the African social grouping which comprises all those descended
178 on one side of the family has largely disappeared
[171] there, though it is possible that at least the vestiges of it may
have survived in other regions of Haiti. Yet in West Africa,
though descent is legally counted on but one side of the
family, psychological adherence to the families of both parents
[177] is everywhere important. Therefore it is logical to assume
that this concept, reinforced by the pattern of dual descent
and double familial affiliation of the French, has been retained
in Haiti to the neglect of the aboriginal larger groupings,
where, as has been seen, not only is relationship counted
on both sides of the family, but, more significantly, the right
to reprimand and punish is held and exerted by elders in both
the maternal and the paternal lines. On the other hand, it is
apparent that the feeling for larger relationship groups has
not been entirely lost, particularly in the paternal line, when

such matters as the passing on of the *loa* in families, the duties 59 611
toward family dead, and the possible inheritance of food 178
taboos are recalled. Like all these survivals, that of food taboos
is not as clear in its expression in Haiti as in its aboriginal 262
setting. Its determination is largely by trial and error, so that [843]
a mother, before the birth of her child, not only abstains from
eating the foods harmful to her, but later carefully tries these
on the child to ascertain their effect. Yet the custom, at best,
is a tenuous one. Sometimes, if food uncongenial to a parent
has ill effects on a person, "he goes on eating it until he becomes
accustomed to it" — though this statement brought
forth an emphatic dissent from another Haitian: "Not I! If
a food harms me once, I am through with it."

Africanisms are particularly marked in the organization of 769
and attitudes toward the ancestral cult. Today the fear of the 17
power of the dead is as living in Haiti as in West Africa, despite
the influence of the Catholic Church in changing concepts
of the heavenly world of the dead and the role of ghosts
on earth. It is quite true that the outer forms of ceremonialism
taken by ancestor-worship in West Africa have disappeared;
but when the meticulousness with which the rites of death
are carried out, and the institution of *mangé morts* are remembered,
it is seen that the spirit of African ritual observances
has by no means been lost. African elements have survived
even in the services for the dead, now largely taken over
by the Church. On the anniversary of death a special commemorative
mass is sung in the church, which the family of
the dead attend in a body. Before they leave the habitation [782]
for the mass, however, animals are killed to provide meat for
the feast which follows the Church service, and for the *mangé*
morts, which also takes place at the same time. Immediately [574]
after the mass a reception takes place at the house of some
member of the family who lives in town, or at the home of a
friend, where cakes and liquors are served. At about noon,
however, family and friends proceed to the habitation, where

769 a *mangé* is given, and that evening, when the feast ends, dances 17 are held. Two or three *tonnelles* are provided, the most important of these being the one where the Martinique cycle, the social dances most beloved by the ancestors, is danced. In one of the remaining two a European *bal* is held, and in the other are the *vodun* dancers. Thus even in connection with a commemorative Church mass for the dead the *mangé morts* and the dancing of African dances are included.

595 The institution of plural marriage, which is socially recog- 177 nized though not legally sanctioned, is obviously African. ●178 Though the *placée* is held in respect and her place in society [554] carries no reproach for herself or her children because of any connotation of immorality, it is of significance for an understanding of the manner of cultural change that prestige in marriage goes with the monogamic union blessed by the Church, and that the "wife"—the woman who is addressed as "Madame"—holds definitely higher social position than the *placée*. Officially the Haitian State is in accord with the position of the Church and recognizes only the European monogamic marriage. Socially, however, African plural marriage is not only tolerated but accepted as a matter of course, and in those instances where plural marriage takes on its most exuberant form, as when men of position have as many as six or seven *placées* in addition to a legal wife, its very size tends to give such a family group, or at least its head, the enviable esteem of his fellow-citizens.

17 Within the family, the deference toward older members [593] and the duties and attitudes toward parents-in-law are Afri- [606] can both in form and in spirit. The exaction of guarantees [583] from a young man before marriage, and the necessity of his proving to the family of his fiancée that he can support her, are perhaps in their generalized form universals, but as found in Haiti show once more a retention of specific aboriginal [584] traditions. On the other hand, such aspects of marriage as the formal *lettre de demand* sent when a match is arranged, or the

178 other African crafts, which, though essentially utilitarian
in Africa, also allow play for the æsthetic impulse, have been
325 lost as well. Ironworking is absent not only because the neces-
326 sary deposits of iron ore are lacking, but because the technique
of shaping the metal into various forms, which in Africa is in
the hands of specialists, was apparently suppressed in the time
286 of slavery. No native cloth is woven. Basketry has survived,
178 but whereas in Africa designs of no small artistic merit are
285 achieved in this medium, it is markedly utilitarian in Haiti.
Even from a technical point of view, the basketry forms are of the simplest, the panniers used for transportation of products on mule-back being merely an in-and-out weave, and the plaited strips of which hats and the *macoute,* or carrying basket, are made are of a parallel simplicity.

524 Few African recreational forms have survived. *Wari,* the
525 draughts-like West African game found today in many parts
178 of the West Indies, is unknown in the interior of Haiti, though
it has been introduced into Port-au-Prince, where it is played by longshoremen who have learned it from the sailors of near-by islands. String figures, important in West Africa, are not encountered, and no children's pursuits comparable to the play of young Africans were seen in Mirebalais, if the minor ceremony of marking the loss of childhood teeth be excepted. African types of recreation have in the main given way to cock-fights and card-games, both of which derive their interest from the opportunities they offer for gambling — a fact important in itself, since gambling is not one of the widespread African vices. The most important card-games are *trois-sept, marriage,* and *bezique,* and both men and women
541 know them and play them for stakes. Similarly cock-fighting,
particularly during the dry season, is a passionate avocation of the men. Large sums are wagered on the results of an encounter, and feeling often runs high.*

533 The Haitian genius for art and recreation is best embodied
535 in the dance and its accompanying songs and drum rhythms.
Virtuosity is attained not only by the dancers, but even more

especially by the drummers. Experience among other Caribbean 533
Negro cultures and in Africa itself has failed to reveal 535
greater skill in calling forth intricate rhythms from batteries [71]
of drums than can be found at any Haitian religious gathering.
The enthusiasm with which a man takes his place at a
drum, the manner in which he loses himself in his drumming,
the skill with which he maintains the time of his complex
beats in common with two other drummers and those who
manipulate the rattles and the iron, bespeak long training and
a passionate devotion to the art. The same is true of dancing.
The best drummer, the finest dancer, hold positions of esteem [554]
in the community, and on occasion their fame will go beyond
the valley, an occurrence as unusual as it is valued. The excellence 533
of the drumming and dancing and the concomitant 535
artistry in song can be understood when one considers the age 868
at which training is begun in these arts. At Mirebalais an infant
of no more than two years has been seen to dance creditably,
while a young boy of six gave a demonstration of drumming
that spoke eloquently of his promise as a drummer of
talent. Before every *vodun* dance the boys take over the drums
while the younger girls dance to their rhythms. They are
watched with a critical eye by their elders, who from time to
time correct them or praise those who do well.

The accompanying musical forms are almost entirely African 533
in their rhythmic structure, but European influence is 177
traceable in their melodic line, which varies from unchanged 178
European folk-melodies to purely African songs. In the use of
the falsetto, however, in the statement of a theme by a leader
and its repetition by a chorus, and in the countless modulations
introduced into the song, the singing is entirely African,
as are the postures struck by those singing.

The importance of the dance is apparent from the large 535
range of dances. Of *vodun* dances there are the *avalou*, or *yanvalou*, 177
a word meaning supplication in the speech of Whydah; 178
the specialized steps for the various Rada and Pétro gods; for 196

535 177 178 [096] *magie* and for the Congo, Ibo, and Nago *loa;* the *mazon*, as an interlude dance between possessions; and steps of the *zaguer*, or salute to the gods. There is also the Martinique cycle of secular dances, including the *sesse*, *callebasse*, and *banda;* the *rara* dances found only at Easter time, and the social Congo dances. Finally European dancing, called *bal*, is performed to the sound of a drum, a phonograph record, or a small orchestra. With a qualified exception of the last, the type of dancing in all these is African. The essence of style in these dances lies in the manipulation of feet and the muscles of the body, particularly those of shoulders, hips, and buttocks, the patterns of which have been carried over in their entirety from the aboriginal homeland. For men and women to dance with arms about each other, as do Europeans, is still regarded in Mirebalais as immoral.

538 178 The trait of African culture that has survived most tenaciously in all the New World, even where European influence has been strongest, is that of folk-literature — of tales, proverbs, and riddles.[7] Though these have flourished in Haiti as elsewhere, prolonged story-telling sessions, so characteristic of other Negro groups, were not encountered in Mirebalais. It is likely that this is principally a seasonal phenomenon, and the failure to find long evenings of story-telling during the summer months, when the rains are at their height and work in the fields is hardest, may properly be an expression of this seasonal variation. As elsewhere in Negro societies, tales and riddles are told at wakes, though their enjoyment by children and their function as a part of the education of the child are as important as in Africa itself. The familiar types of African animal stories and the tales of human tricksters and magicians are well known, and well told. The figure who corresponds to Br'er Rabbit, or to the spider Anansi, is the little 'Ti Malice, while the foil for his pranks is the great awkward Bouki.[8]

One folkloristic element that gives Haitian life a strong African flavor is the proverb, which, as elsewhere in Negro

cultures, is used not only to point morals for the young but as 538
an expression of the characteristically oblique forms of Negro 178
expression in a quarrel, or in sounding a warning, or in com-
menting acidly on some social situation. A famous proverb, 539
quoted from the earliest days, is today heard often in Mireba- 538
lais: "*Zafai' mouton pas zafai' cabrit*—The affairs of the 178
sheep are not the affairs of the goat"—an injunction against
gossip. When a person boasts that no one can harm him, the
reply may come: "It is on a narrow path that one has to deal
with a difficult horse." Should a man dismiss an experience as
of but little consequence to him, he may hear the comment:
"Often one pays an ox for a goat." When one person does
harm to another, his victim may warn him with the phrase:
"Behind the mountains are other mountains." If a man whose
fortunes are flourishing attempts to console another who has
suffered misfortune, or a rich man jibes at a poor one, the re-
tort may be: "The rock under the water doesn't know how the
rock in the sun suffers." To such an extent do proverbs com-
ment on all aspects of life that almost no extended conversa-
tion occurs without them. Some of these are of European ori-
gin, but both numerically and in their use their character is
preponderantly African, as is shown by their specific corre-
spondence to proverbs used today in the regions from which
the Negroes of Haiti were derived.*

In the practice of magic, and more especially of black magic, 789
it has been noted that African and European traditions have 178
combined into an integrated cultural unit. The outward ex- 177
pression of magic in the charm or "fetish" as an aspect of 154
African life is so obvious that it has been commented on by all
observers. In Haiti, though the charms are not prominently
displayed and personal charms especially are worn beneath
the clothing, this concept of their importance in coping with
life has been retained. Yet, as has been seen, Haitian magic is
not African alone. For while the forces behind protective
magic are primarily the *loa*, and those behind black magic are

789 the powers that control the souls of the dead and those crea-
754 tures of evil whose powers come from Satan — all this being
177 African enough, in the sense that evil magic exists in Africa as
178 elsewhere — the point, which bears repetition, is that the primary sanctions for evil magic have been reinforced by the books of magic handed down from medieval Europe.

789 In this system, however, not only do European books of
177 magic figure, but the Church also has its place. "The things of
178 the Church are always affairs of magic," remarked one Haitian, meaning that they are best adapted to this purpose and are used when the opportunity is had. It is for this reason that great care is taken to keep all sacred objects in churches from the hands of unauthorized persons. To have something that has come from a church, such as a bit of a priest's robe or a few splinters from the statue of a saint, enlists the power of these on behalf of any objective that the maker of magic has in view, and invests any *garde* made with these with the power of God Himself. Thus the twofold meaning of the proverb:
[539] "*Vrai maré corde, vrai wanga, c'est l'Eglise* — The real tying of the cord, the true *wanga*, is the Church," or, similarly: "*Vrai hungan c'est l'Église* — The true *hungan* is the
[754] Church." However, whether it be through such African-like practices as the use of colored cloth, or caolin, or the tying of knots, or whether objects filched from the sanctuary of the church be employed, evil magic, derived alike from African and European sources, continues as a potent force of Haitian peasant life. For perhaps in magic more than in any other aspect of his culture has the peasant achieved a synthesis of the two currents that have contributed to his civilization. He has taken from both, and inasmuch as both adhere to a more general pattern which marks all the Old World, neither tradition has had to give way to the other.

776 171 [162] d'Angole) is obviously Angola, while the designations Ibo and Congo speak for themselves. Simbi is a Congo deity, as are Bumba and Lemba. Finally, in the categories of gods important in the regions of Haiti other than Mirebalais are the Loa Sénégal, and the Loa Mondong, both of which are names of African tribes mentioned in the early literature as contributing to the Haitian slave population. But all recognition of geographical names as such has disappeared, and they have been transmuted into designations of gods.

192 199 Outstanding here is the word *vodun* itself, already indicated as Dahomean, where it is a general term for "deity," though in Haiti its use has become more restricted and the symbol for deity has become the word *loa*, or *mystère*. The origin of the designation *loa*, which has been claimed to be a corruption of the French *roi*, is debatable. It is true that in West Africa certain deities are regarded as kings, yet this derivation is not convincing in view of the fact that in the *vodun* cult as found in Haiti at present or as described in earlier sources the *loa* are never generally referred to as kings, something that tends to strengthen statements that have been made to the effect that the word comes from the language of a Congo tribe.[1] The source of the root *hun-*, which figures in the terms *hungan*, *hunsi*, and *humfort*, is clear, for in Dahomey it is a synonym for the word *vodun*. *Hungan* and *hunsi* are even more definitely traceable than *humfort*, since the ending *-gan*, the Dahomean word for chief, designates the priest as the chief of the spirits, and *-si*, "wife," is employed in the sense of "wife of the god" or his devotee, in Africa as in Haiti. The female counterpart of *hungan*, *mambu*, cannot be definitely assigned, but may be of Bantu derivation, and is certainly an African word.

776 171 178 424 769 Other uncontaminated Africanisms can be discerned in the attitude of the Haitians toward the *loa* and in the ceremonies for them. One of the most characteristic is the inheritance of *loa* in families, a direct survival of the belief which not only

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makes for deification of the family dead, but constitutes the 771
oldest ancestor of a relationship group one of the great gods 778
and thus causes families to give primary allegiance to a re- 424
stricted number of deities. The most striking aspect of this 769
tradition preserved in Haiti is that all ceremonies must be 787
given by family groups, and at them only members of the fam- 796
ily may with propriety become possessed. Possession itself, and 771 778
the elements which constitute the possession complex — the 53
use of the drums, the rhythms associated with particular gods,
the importance of songs in calling the spirits, the mode of
worship through specific dances for specific deities — these
make up another series of Africanisms. In the dance itself the
use of iron to sound basic rhythms for the drums, the outer
form and function of the rattle, and the fact that the circle of
participants always rotates in a counter-clockwise direction,
are equally African. The modes of behavior to be observed as
possession comes on and the psychological release that follows
it both derive from the same source, as do the beliefs that rit-
uals must be held on the days sacred to the particular god
being worshipped.

Another retention of African tradition is a belief in the im- 771
portance of sacrifice. It will be remembered that it is held to 778
be more essential to "feed" the gods than to dance for them. 782
This is also the tradition of all peoples of the region from
which the slaves were derived, and in a sense reflects the very
immediate relationship that obtains between Africans, or
Haitians, and their gods. Since in both regions each deity per-
forms the double role of doing good for those who worship
it properly and harassing those who neglect it, the importance
of giving adequate sacrifices to avert evil is evident. In both
Haiti and Africa, however, these may differ with the wealth of
the individual giving the offering, with the number of persons
who contribute toward the ceremony where offerings are
given, or with the seriousness of the situation which the deity
is being asked to remedy. That the gods permit such varia-

171 178 782 tion is a further comment both upon the human traits ascribed to them, and upon the realism with which they take cognizance — as only African gods can — of the financial position of their devotees!

171 178 776 778 It is not only in the immediacy of the Haitian gods to their worshippers and in their human qualities, however, that these beings have retained African traits, for in the full reciprocity that must prevail in the relationship between deities and their followers is to be seen a point of view that is entirely non-European. Between man and the gods the rule of *quid pro quo* must always be in operation; and this rule may only be regarded as but another contribution of Africa toward Haitian religious ideology. While this reciprocal giving flavors all aspects of worship whether it be of the *loa,* the dead, or the twins, it takes a yet more prominent, and more familiar place in the field of magic, since here the *engagement* owes much to European belief, though the element of reciprocity is much more emphasized than was ever the case in medieval European diabolism.

178 776 794 The psychological values of the *vodun* cult, especially the general tone found in the feeling toward the terms *Guinée* or *Rada,* perhaps most convincingly show the attitudes that aided in the retention of things recognizably African. [184] For while the Pétro gods are by no means viewed as altogether bad, or are always held unwelcome, the fact that in Mirebalais, as in Haiti generally, the Rada gods are those least feared, most desired, and in connection with whose cult wrongdoing is most rarely present, is of the greatest significance, especially when the related fact is recalled that the Pétro gods are the more powerful in the matter of evil magic, while the Rada deities are said to exert their power to protect their devotees from the dark forces that may be set in motion against them.

178 771 776 In attitudes toward the gods, then, in the names of the gods themselves, in the manner in which they function in the lives of Haitians, and in the importance of the ceremonial con-

nected with them, much of African tradition which has carried 178
over into Haitian religious life has been retained in pure 771
form. Yet the intrusion of Catholic custom into these African 776
patterns—often noted, though generally in passing—also 177
must be studied if the significance of the forms of Haitian folk- 771
religion is to be grasped. That this aspect of *vodun* has re- 794
ceived the scant attention it has had is probably to be ascribed to two causes.[2] The first takes the Catholic element for granted, so that even where a particularly dramatic element of Catholic practice is seen in an African setting, such as a crucifix or the portraits of the saints on a *vodun* altar, specific mention is made of this without attempting to dissect its historic or psychological role. The second reason for the comparative disregard of Catholic influence is that for Europeans it is a commonplace. Spirit possession and sacrifices, African song and drum rhythms are more " exciting " than prayers or hymns of the Church. Underlying both these causes is the deep-rooted and unquestioned assumption that, in contact with any non-European culture, the patterns that govern European behavior must prevail. Consequently, is it not in the nature of things that Catholicism should have taken root in the *vodun* cult? Is not rather the matter to be stressed that African traditions should have been retained at all? That the process should actually have been one of amalgamation rather than of dominance is rarely taken into account. Yet to go deeper into the significance of this process in Haitian life is to open far-reaching vistas.

An outstanding sanction taken by the *vodun* cult from 177
Catholicism is that of the baptismal rites. Though ceremonies 771
of consecration are a commonplace in Africa, and the African 794
ritual of washing the head—*lavé tête,* as it is termed—has 788
not been forgotten, in Mirebalais the importance of baptism 778
as a means whereby human beings obtain their place in this world and in the next has been carried over and applied to all matters of ceremonial significance. Thus just as in the lives of

779 798 Today the church takes full advantage of its status as the only recognized religious organization in Haiti to dictate the official position of government toward *vodun*. Permission for *vodun* dances and for *services* must be obtained from the officer commanding the local detachment of the Garde d'Haiti, and this is not always granted. Penalties [688] for illicit dances and ceremonies are severe, and because gossip is ubiquitous and no man lacks enemies, apprehension is prompt. Thus in the instance of one *service*, a misunderstanding regarding the permit was sufficient to cause the detention for some hours of the one responsible for the rite.

771 178 177 Is it possible, then, for a person to be a communicant of the Church and partake of the sacrament without feeling this weight of spiritual and official disapprobation? More particularly, is it possible for him to omit from his confession all allusion to his worship of "false" gods? It is here that one encounters a singularly tenacious survival of African traditional belief. In Africa the conquest of one people by another meant the mutual interchange and acceptance of the respective deities. The conquerors added to their own pantheons the gods of those whom they had overcome so that these forces might not wreak a supernatural vengeance upon them; while to the conquered the power of the gods of those who had defeated them was self-evident. If the worship of the Christian God and of the saints of the Church intruded on the aboriginal religious patterns of the Negroes brought to Haiti, the acceptance of such worship did not imply rejection of the old gods. Nor does membership in the Church today mean such complete acquiescence in its doctrines and pronouncements that the worshipper of the *loa* will offer himself for the malediction of the priest by confessing his adherence to their cult. The situation somewhat parallels that in Africa itself, where the first effort of Protestant missionaries is directed toward inducing their converts to abjure polygyny. This dictum is complied with readily enough on the surface, so that a man will have but one wife — in one village! In Haiti the

problem of confession is met in the manner explained by a woman who is a devotee of the *loa:* "The *loa* are not the things of the priest. Why should I tell him about them? If I come and take this book of yours, it isn't mine, and I am a thief. If the priest tells me I must not worship my *loa*, they are not his *loa*, and he cannot take them from me. Does anyone expect me to come and tell him that my father, my mother, my sisters and brothers, and all my family serve the *loa*?" 771 177 178

For the Haitian, therefore, the forces of the universe are under dual control. And though, as has been stated when the cosmology of the system of *vodun* worship was discussed, he may reconcile this duality, yet in practice he must observe the rites of his *loa* separately; he must pray to God and the saints apart. His reconciliations he keeps to himself, and in his everyday life both the African beliefs and those of the Church have their place. No better illustration of this could be had than in the incident of the white cock named for the serpent-god Damballa, that had been spared until the final day of this field-work when, as the last of a large brood, his time had come to be killed for the table of his owner. On this afternoon, when he was "to meet his destiny," the cook took him up quietly. A number of feathers were plucked from him, and then, as the sharp knife, describing a cross, ended his life, the whispered phrase could just be heard: "*Damballa, je crois en Dieu* — Damballa, I believe in God."

CHAPTER XV

SOME WIDER IMPLICATIONS

158 No student of Haitian institutions can elude a progressively
182 sharpened awareness of the psychological conflict that is being
waged within the frame of Haitian society. And though examples of the divergent forces which lie at the root of this conflict have been set forth in the preceding chapters, some of the more important of these may be recalled here.

● 178 In his social relationships the Haitian is constantly exposed
182 to the demands of a code of morality which requires marriage
595 to be monogamic. Yet the African tradition of polygyny, and
158 the undoubtedly satisfactory arrangements of both an economic and a social nature that can be made under the terms
178 of plural marriage, pull him toward this form. The case is even
182 stronger in the field of religion, which in Haiti is not a thing
771 remote from life, but an intimate part of existence. On the one
158 hand, because of his inheritance of the *loa*, he must meet his obligations toward these ancestral gods of Africa who punish harshly those who fail them, so that he must either continue their traditional worship or learn to know the consequences of their anger. Yet on the other hand, the priest thunders his
[197] maledictions and threats of eternal damnation — in Mirebalais, at least, often in Creole, a language which the peasant can understand — against those of his flock, the vast majority

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

158

of whom are sincere practicing vodunists as they are sincere 178●
practicing Catholics, who do not put an end to the worship of 182
false gods. 771
(197)

The absence of graphic and plastic arts in Haitian culture, 532
commented upon in a preceding chapter, must also be re- 178
garded as a case in point in laying bare the anatomy of this 158
inner conflict of tradition, since it is important to recognize 182
that the suppression of these forms of the prevalent African tradition would seem to have lost to the Haitian an important outlet for the resolution of inner tensions caused by pent-up
drives. Even more revealing is the substitution of games of 525
chance for those games of skill which in most African and New 178
World Negro societies are played for their own sake alone — 158
that is, for the prestige accruing to the skillful player. The 182
strain that accompanies this play for stakes, often of no inconsiderable value in terms of the resources of the players, is patent to the most casual observer. The question here arises whether or not the craving for excitement of this kind may not in Haiti be traceable to the inhibition, under slavery, of some of the more gracious forms of African life which there make for social equilibrium. Might it not represent a kind of compensation for the thwarted psychic ease with which a culturally undisturbed people approach their own existence — a state of being which, in contrast, is quite lacking in Haiti?

A singularly illuminating comment upon these manifesta- 158
tions of instability in Haitian life has been made by Dr. J. C. Dorsainvil, who in drawing his conclusion called both upon his own medical training and on his experience of many years as a profound student of his own people. " It has perhaps been insufficiently remarked to what an astonishing degree the Haitian people live on their nerves."[1] As might be expected, he advances a number of possible explanations of the causes that underlie this state of " living on nerves." The wear and tear of life in the tropics is given as one reason; another is the excitement of the *vodun* dances with their frenzy of possession;

tudes governing Negro-white relationships in this country at the present time. 177

Haiti has experienced as long and perhaps as intensive a degree of exposure to European influences as any area where non-Europeans have lived in contact with European patterns of life. 178 It has, in addition, completely passed through initial and secondary periods of contact into a state where the social milieu represents more than a century of consolidation of the original influences. Yet the Haitian Negro has by no means been overwhelmed by European tradition, just as he has not retained his aboriginal African heritage without any change. The process is seen to be one of selection, of working over, of revamping and recombining the elements of the contributing cultures, with the result that the ensuing combinations, though of recognizable derivation, differ from their aboriginal forms.

More problems of general interest are also pointed and illustrated by the material from Haiti. One assumption often made in viewing the course of cultural change is that the intangible aspects of a culture are less prone to give way before foreign influences than are its technological and economic aspects. The "natural" conservatism of religion and social organization is often particularly stressed in contrast with the relatively greater tendency to change shown by tools and weapons; clothing, housing, and utensils of various sorts. And though such assertions have some basis in fact, as both our own culture and the cultures of numerous other folk show, yet in the material on Haiti it is clear that neither in technology nor in economic organization have the traditions of Europe entirely prevailed over those of Africa, nor are they in any sense absent in the fields of social organization, religion, music, and dancing. It would seem that while a certain hospitality to European concepts and customs is apparent, there has at the same time been a retention of African modes of life in all sectors of Haitian culture to a degree which

177 suggests that generalizations as to the relative pliability of
● 178 any specific phases of a culture under exposure to another are premature.

562 Are women more conservative than men in respect to
178 cultural change? The appropriateness of the affirmative answer often given can be tested to advantage in studies such as this. The answer, in Haiti, would seem to be that where work at home shields women from the influences of the outer world, this conservatism is found, but where they have an opportunity to come into contact with new trends, no less change enters into their activities than into that of the men. Thus in such matters as the organization of the Haitian household, the cuisine, or the time of meals, the logic of the situation has caused women to preserve Africanisms in full vigor, while historical causes have also similarly aided them in such things as retaining their African role as traders in the markets. In other phases of their lives, however, women, like men, have accepted European patterns, as is evidenced in the field of religion, where no greater resistance has been shown by women toward new forms than by men.

182 Other examples might be cited, but these indicate how a culture such as that of Haiti, as regards both its inner values and the psychological responses made to them, and its outer form and the manner in which its present-day character was attained, aids in sharpening and clarifying the questions that must be asked and answered if a better grasp of the dynamics of custom and the way in which tradition plays upon the inner being of those who are its carriers is to be had. However, it is not alone in general considerations such as these that the study of Haitian life can be of use. Much that is perplexing in that particular facet of the problem of race which in America is termed the "Negro problem" has both analogy and contrast in Haitian life. It must not be forgotten that the slaves who were brought to continental America were of the same types and of the same background as those imported

Africa remains? That this has the widest currency needs no explanation, nor, again, that it is held as true by Negroes as by whites. Indeed, any demonstration to the contrary invariably meets with remonstrance, while indications that Africanisms have even invaded white patterns of behavior are received with incredulity. This reaction is understandable enough if it is referred to the other belief already mentioned concerning the "savage" nature of aboriginal Negro background. Yet despite popular acceptance, despite "scientific" pronouncements that Negro music, Negro speech, Negro games, and Negro folk-beliefs stem from European sources, the student who is equipped with a background of African custom and West Indian practice can see the essential unsoundness of such claims. Cultures do not entirely give way one before another, even where the one was carried by slaves and the other by masters; even though the one is separated from its source by thousands of miles and hundreds of years, and the other derives a continuous renewal of vitality from constant contact with its original home. Once again reference [199] to Haiti is to be made: to the fact that in economic life, in ● [198] social organization, in religion, in music and dance, Africa has not disappeared, nor, at the same time, have the influences from France failed to stamp themselves on present-day behavior. Cannot the same be said of all areas of the New World where Negroes are gathered in great numbers?[2]

These questions can only be raised here; their answer is the matter of long years of patient investigation yet ahead. But may it not be true that the Negro in the United States has preserved some vestiges of his aboriginal heritage even in outward institutionalized forms; that in his attitudes, points of view, and characteristic responses to social situations the factors of his dual heritage have not been entirely lost; and, as would follow elsewhere as it has followed in Haiti, that this may be reflected in his resulting personality types? Even the possibility of affirmative answers strongly suggests that further in-

776 177 one with the Holy Virgin. St. Jacques has become one with Ogoun, St. George with Linglessou, St. Anthony and St. Christopher with Legba, guardian of the highway, and St. Nicholas with Marassa Trois. In northern Haiti the word *zange* (from the French, *les anges*—the angels) sometimes is used synonymously with loa or mystère. As for the saints, they are sometimes identified with one loa, sometimes with another.

776 177 178 No one in Haiti knows all the loa. Some of them are so ancient as to be nearly forgotten. Others are spontaneous creations or revelations on the part of a possessed person. Some loa names may be the result of a devotee's seizing upon a word or phrase in a religious song and imparting to it the concept of a loa. Sometimes a word in a phrase of *langage* is taken to be a loa's name, and sometimes agglutinated Creole words become the name of a loa.

776 178 197 [193] The possibility of frequent additions to the list of loa is heightened still further by the general illiteracy of the Haitian people and the lack of a stabilizing influence in the written word. The Creole language has marked regional differences. Furthermore, change of consonants or vowels is a commonplace occurrence, so that a single loa's name may have several forms. One may well wonder whether Aza, Adja, and Akadja were not originally a single individual. Nevertheless, in the Haitian scheme they are now different personalities.

776 171 552 There is one more complicating factor in identifying loa or compiling a comprehensive roster—the use of multiple names. In addition to the names by which they are generally known, many of the deities have a variety of nicknames. Some of these nicknames are in Creole, some appear to be of West African provenience. The deity Agwé, for example, is frequently called Coqui-nan-Mer—Coqui-in-the-Sea. A loa may have four, five, or even more such nicknames. Sometimes short forms are used. Damballa may be called Da, Sobo may be called So, Azaka may be called Za. In addition, some deities have "secret" names, which theoretically are known only to the priesthood and the inner circle of servitors. Multiple naming and the reservation of certain names for special occasions appear to have West African precedents.

In the naming of the loa no neat and methodical system is apparent at any point. The "surname," or what may be in some cases a generic designation, may appear first or last. One may hear Ogoun Chango or Chango Ogoun, Général Brisé or Brisé Général, Congo Savane or Savane [551] Congo. (This is characteristic of everyday speech. A former president of Haiti, Nord Alexis, is often called Alexis Nord.) The "surname" can be a description of "tribal" or "national" affiliation, regional provenience, character and temperament, or an indication of function. Thus we find

house, which is on fire. But there is no grief, because Ogoun is the 796
master of fire: 776
273

Pierre, Pierre Narcisse oh!	Pierre, Pierre Narcisse, oh!
Yago moula-é!	*Yago moula-é!*
Caille Ogoun boulé!	Ogoun's house is burning!
Gildive Ogoun bel là!	Ogoun's distillery is beautiful!
Na consolé! [Ex. 88]	We console ourselves!

[539]
[533]

Some of the ritual songs that have persisted through the years have 533
lost their explicit meaning but continue to survive because of beautiful 539
melodies and perhaps the strange images they evoke. Such a song is 776
this one to the loa Atti Daï, from the Dahomey service: [178]

Atti Daï oh!	Atti Daï, oh!
Yo voyé dit moin	They sent to tell me
Min soleil malade! *	The sun was sick!
Quan'm té rivé	When I arrived
Moin joind soleil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
Quan'm té rivé	When I arrived
Moin joind soleil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
C'est regrettant ça	What grief it was
Pou'm enterré soleil! [Ex.89]	For me to bury the sun!

One of the truly lovely songs of the Dahomey rites, both in melody and in lyrics, is the following one to the deity Êzilie. It shows clear evidence of Catholic ritual influence in both its text and its music. Êzilie Fréda, who seems to be speaking most of the lines, is identified with the Virgin Mary, and the tone of this piece casts her more in her Catholic role than her African. The deity is speaking from Yagazza, a place described as being "on the other side of the water." In form the song is atypical in that it has more than one movement and progresses from one idea to another. [177]

Êzilie Nainain oh!
Êzilie Nainain oh!
Êzilie oh, c'est moin Yagazza!

Êzilie n'ap marché n'ap couté n'ap parlé pou' temps y'ap parlé parole moin!
Êzilie n'ap marché n'ap couté pou' temps y'ap parlé parole mwé!
Êzilie Nainain oh!
Êzilie Fréda oh Nainain oh!
Êzilie Fréda oh, c'est moin Yagazza!

Mesdames nà yo chita nan caille là yo vlé djaillé oh tout temps soleil pas lévé!
Mesdames yo passé ya tombé tè à génoux y'apé plainsinc le sort yo!

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* Some Haitian informants vouched that *soleil* meant "sun." Others felt that this word in the song was really Solé, a diminutive of *Attisolé*, another name for Atti Daï. [114]
[115]

rather starve than work. An Englishman, James Franklin, wrote in 181
1828, for example: 461

> Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed.

As Franklin summarized it: "Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he [464]
never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other
countries."[1]

The early nineteenth century saw a flood of such bitter comments 175
about the remains of the once rich and flourishing French colony of 433
St. Domingue. The vast productivity of Haiti under French rule had 648
made that colony one of the richest in the New World. The country [257]
was dotted with sugar mills, brick-covered wells, and warehouses; and [312]
carefully built brick aqueducts, irrigation canals, locks, and dams assured [488]
water for the plantations. In 1790, under the slave system, Haiti had [567]
exported 163,000,000 pounds of sugar. In 1826, a quarter of a century [439]
after the revolution, it was reported to have exported 33,000 pounds.

This falling off in production and exports doubtless had many causes, 175
but one of the most significant was the Haitian's revolt not only against 461
slavery but also against continuing the same kind of work he had 466
performed as a slave. He saw not too much difference between forced, 423
unpaid labor and working for any large landholder at subsistence wages. 567
To the Haitian slave the inspiring battle cry of the French Revolution did not mean that all men would work together on another's man plantation and receive the same wages. It meant that every man would have his own garden to work for himself as he chose; every man would be a full citizen, with land of his own, free to come and go, to plant what he wished, to sell what he could. Despite long years under a colonial slave system, the Haitian still remembered a different way of life in Africa, where mass production for export was not the primary objective of labor.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Haiti 175
was not much more than half a million—less than one sixth of what it 178 ●
is today. There was plenty of land, and much of it had not yet been 311
wasted by constant tilling and erosion. When the French were driven [161]
out, the Haitian peasant re-created an economic world of his own liking. [648]
The plantation system which had poured out sugar and coffee and indigo for Europe faded away, and in its place there sprang up an agrarian system which has continued until the present day. In the early

[1] [Franklin, The Present State of Hayti, P. 362. Cf. P. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

175 In the early
178 years of independence, Emperor Henry Christophe in the north and
311 President Pétion in the south tried to stem the disintegration of the
[643] magnificent plantations. Christophe's measures in the region he con-
[656] trolled were sometimes stern, according to legend; but the plantation
system and the plantations themselves gradually fell into decay, along
with the aqueducts, the warehouses, and the sugar mills. For the Haitian
had returned to a tradition of landholding antedating his enslavement.

175 Europe's loss of the Pearl of the Antilles aroused bitter words from
648 Frenchmen and Englishmen for the better part of the century. They
181 accused the Negro of laziness and lack of ability, repeating endlessly
that only as a colony could Haiti ever be of any use to anybody. The
London *Times* deplored the Haitian's unwillingness to work for wages,
speculating that he had "no desire for property strong enough to induce
him to labor with sustained power." In the United States, antiabolitionist
enthusiasts cited the Haitian situation as an example of what would
happen to the American economy if the slaves were freed.

464 The Haitian's reluctance to work for wages did not reflect an aversion
423 to owning property, however, as the London *Times* supposed. On the
311 contrary, it was engendered by his desire for property. The land was
there and waiting, only needing a house to be built upon it, and to be
cleared and tilled. The typical Haitian wanted not dubious, seasonal
wage work but a farm of his own. The more ambitious peasant aspired
to two farms, or even three, with a homestead and a family on each.
423 If a man worked hard and made a success of one plot, he could put
595 away money and eventually buy a second. The additional land might be
178 separated by some miles from the original farm. On the new ground
583 the man would build another house and take another wife to take
care of it in his absence. Known as *plaçage*, this arrangement had com-
plete community sanction. A man whose energies and good fortune
made an extra household possible was expected to make such an arrange-
[997] ment. It was not a new institution bred in the chaos following the
Revolution, nor was it, as some missionaries held, an evidence of moral
deterioration of the Haitian character. It was simply a persisting concept
of West African life.[2] The woman who occupied the second or third
household was not a concubine. Like the first wife, she had enhanced
prestige in her community. She had authority and responsibility. Her
work, her position, and her rewards were not essentially different from
those of the first wife.[3] It is true that her marriage was not consecrated
by a church or civil ceremony, but, ordinarily, neither was that of the
[581] first wife. Contrary to European misconceptions, such unions were true
marriages in the sense that they had full sanction of the community.

2 3 [Footnotes appear in Category 116, pp. 351-352.
--Analyst]

[P.112-JJ]

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● [178]
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61. *Detail of a wood carving made about 1930 in the region of Port-au-Prince, representing the loa Loko. Work of this kind in mahogany has in the past thirty years deteriorated into neo-"African" carvings made for the tourist trade.*

60. *A carved cane head from the southwestern mountains.*

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←

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→

62. *A cayambouque. Cut from a single calabash, the two parts fit together tightly to form a single container. Some cayambouques are a foot or more tall. Height, 8 inches.*

63. *Terra-cotta figurines from the Cap Haitien region.*

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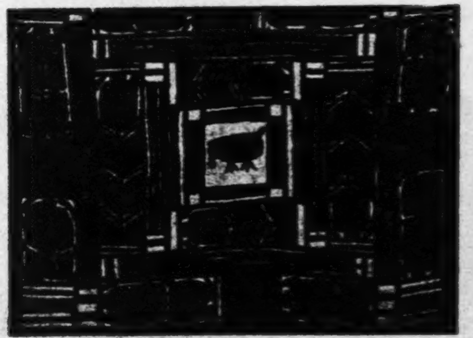
→



64. *Detail of a dye-painted burlap cloth. Animal and flower figures and geometric designs are used interchangeably.*

857 868 handle it; lighter work first, heavier work later. Small boys tend cattle and help the men in the fields.

178 511 The Haitian *habitant* (the peasant) is poorer and hungrier today than he was fifty years ago, or even twenty years ago. In 1955 I visited a number of peasant families I had known since 1932, and with hardly an exception I found them worse off than they had been before. Their [134] tiny landholdings had shrunk. Some land that had been lush had dried up and eroded. Little groves of trees had disappeared. Clothes had become shabby, and many of the men could no longer afford to wear the inexpensive traditional blue denim costume that was once so common. In the cities there is evidence that some of the elite have improved their life. But in a large part of the countryside the peasants are finding that the old system that served them for a hundred and fifty years can no longer feed them adequately.

423 178 One of the adverse forces is the shrinking of landholdings. Once a peasant family may have owned and worked fifty or seventy acres of ground. But it is traditional that on a man's death his land is divided [428] among the heirs. If a man with fifty acres of land has two sons, each son inherits approximately twenty-five acres. On their deaths, the land 423 427 is again subdivided. But even this is not the whole story. A UNESCO survey of the Marbial Valley region in south Haiti in 1948–1949 reported:

> At the turn of the century there were numerous peasant families who lived in relatively easy circumstances, and who possessed as much as thirty to forty *carreaux* * [425] of land planted with coffee and subsistence crops. The heirs of these lands, when they found themselves in straitened circumstances, would sell some parcels of it in the hope of being able to increase their holdings again later on. In the worst cases they became the tenants of absentee landlords who lived in the cities. Nowadays, not only is the size of holdings very small, sometimes only one-eighth of a *carreau*, but they are also scattered, and most peasants are obliged to go from one place to another to cultivate their various owned, rented, or share-cropped fields.[3]

671 595 423 848 Haitian law—the civil code—does not recognize the rights of illegitimate children born after a legal marriage. But Haitian custom does. As a result, a Haitian who has a *placée* wife in addition to his "legal" wife may circumvent the law by deeding to her a portion of his gardens during his lifetime, thereby diminishing his holdings.

423 691 Furthermore, many landholdings are not clearly defined. There are few accurate surveys, and often the boundaries are vague. Titles to many of the holdings cannot be clearly established, and as a result there are constant lawsuits. To pay the expenses of defending his interests in court, a Haitian may have to sell a strip of his land.

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* A carreau is about three and a third acres.

[3] [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, p. 18. Cf. p. 352, category 116. -- Analyst]

For many Haitians, the struggle to obtain a piece of ground and to 423
hold onto it is the very heart of the struggle for existence. On Morne 691
l'Hôpital in 1932 I knew a man who owned ten acres of gardens. He had 511
it planted in bananas and plantains, yams, and cotton. He had two cows and a calf and a grove of mango trees and coconut palms. His house was clean, tidy, and by Haitian standards well furnished. Eighteen years later he had less than an acre of land, no trees, no cotton, and no cattle. His family had become impoverished. He had three grown children and virtually no land to leave to them except that on which the house stood. His troubles began with a lawsuit over his land title. He sold his cattle to raise money to pay his court expenses. He lost half of his land as a result of the lawsuit, most of it the part with the good trees. Later, he sold more land to raise "eating money," and then rented it from the new owner. He could not grow enough cash crops to pay the rent and was finally evicted. Today he has not enough ground left on which to grow food for himself and his wife the year round.

The diminution of adequate landholdings has resulted in the disappearances 178
of many of the *lacours* (hamlets) that were a familiar sight a 423
few decades ago. Young people traditionally built their houses near the 361
family homesteads until there were five, six, or a dozen houses in a 166
group. There was a natural family community which shared a common [596]
social life and the work of the fields. But as the population increased and [621]
the landholdings shrank, young people and old began to move away in search of new land, or work in the cities. Often where the lacour remains it is only as a settlement of landless house renters who work where they may for wages.

Economic refugees from rural areas seek wage work in the cities, 166
returning to their original homes only on special festive days for family 464
reunions. The men find employment as gardeners, servants, construction laborers, and stevedores. Some find work on the sugar and sisal plantations, others in craft industries making straw hats, baskets, shoes, chairs, and mahogany ware for export. The struggle in the big city of Port-au-Prince is for many of them worse than the poverty they left behind. There are the inevitable slums and the constant threat of hunger. It is in the big city that one hears most often the words *moin grand gout* (I am hungry), and least often the words *Bondieu bon* (God is good).

The land hunger increases, and the overflow of the mountain settlements continues to move cityward. In former years there was a trend 167
toward emigration across the eastern border into the Dominican Re- 175
public, which has a population density roughly one third or one fourth
that of Haiti. This trend was checked, temporarily at least, in 1937 by [648]

167 a massacre in the western part of the Dominican Republic which took
175 the lives of an estimated five thousand to fifteen thousand Haitians.
[848] The survivors fled homeward, and many were settled in frontier areas
by the government. Even so, today there are believed to be some sixty
or seventy thousand Haitians still living east of the border. Large
numbers of Haitians, particularly men, migrated to Cuba in the years
following World War I, in search of better wages in the cane fields. By
1931 there were more than eighty thousand Haitians in that country.[1]
But resentment by local Cuban labor and the onset of the depression
combined to force the repatriation of great numbers of them. Thirty
thousand Haitians came home from Cuba in the years 1936 and 1937
alone.

16 Solution of Haiti's problem of overpopulation does not seem imminent.
[842] The obvious answers would seem to be birth control, emigration, wiser
use of natural resources, and industrialization. Since the country is predominantly Catholic, and since much social value is placed on children,
birth control seems unlikely. And as health facilities become more widespread and infant mortality drops, the pressure will become more acute.
Emigration seems to offer no hope, since neighboring islands and countries
[311] on the mainland give no encouragement. The Haitian may yet learn to conserve his land and to get more out of it, to stock his lakes with fish, and to
[47] bring more fish in from the sea. But this will not suffice. Nothing is left
but industrialization, and that seems to be a thing of the far-distant future.

181 Nevertheless, the character of Haitian life remains essentially agrarian.
167 The displaced peasant, whether he is now a hotel "houseboy," a taxi
461 driver, or a cane cutter, dreams of returning to the land some day and
growing bananas, coffee, and cotton that will make him independent.
In far-off places such as Havana and New York, Haitians work and
save money with the expectation that one day they will come home, buy
fifteen or twenty acres of ground, build a new house, and live out their
lives as decently prosperous *habitants*. The traditions of the agricultural
[178] society, along with Voodoun, continue to play a significant role in the
life of the people.

426 One such tradition is the institution of the *coumbite*, a loosely knit
241 coöperative work party of neighbors and friends. The word itself probably
comes from the Spanish *convide*, or *convite*, meaning "to invite." A
member of the group holds a coumbite by notifying his fellow members
that on such-and-such a day his fields will require clearing or hoeing.
There are several variants of the work gathering. One, called *carré* or
corvée, meets at irregular intervals and only on special invitation. There
are no regular reciprocal obligations in the *corvée*; the workers are

[1] [Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 515. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. --Analyst)

476 171 [461] many non-European characteristics. The manner of work, even down to specific motor activity, has direct and hardly disputable West African connections. Instead of the short-handled West African hoe, the Haitians use a long-handled one, and they work more erect than stooped. But the rhythmic, synchronized use of the hoe, the singing leader and the musicians who stand to one side to "encourage" the workers, the calling of the workers by drum *rappels*, the special consideration for the sick, and the concept of long-term community endeavor are all of West African beginnings. The coumbite is the legitimate descendant of the Dahomean *dokpwe*, the *kurum* of the Mambila (Cameroons), the *ku* of the Kpelle (Liberia), and other West African coöperative systems.

171 476 461 Although the *dokpwe* of Dahomey is a more formal and intricate institution, permeated with certain abstract and ritual concepts, its social and functional characteristics are not greatly different from those of the Haitian coumbite, in which coöperation is marked. Herskovits notes that working with the Dahomean *dokpwe*

> represents recreation rather than labor to the individual member. There is song and dance to drumming and the sound of gongs, on the way and after arrival, and there is feasting and an exhibition of skill. It is an impressive sight to see from forty to a hundred men kneading earth for walls, or laying thatch, or hoeing the earth with unison movements to the accompaniment of conversation and laughter, and the songs of such of their fellows, who, for the moment at rest, have constituted themselves the chorus.

476 171 When more than one *dokpwe* is summoned for work on the same project, Herskovits notes,

> there is great rivalry among the organizations to see which one will first complete its allotted task. If only one *dokpwe* is present, there is either individual rivalry, or the *dokpwe* may be divided into two groups which compete one against the other. The food which is provided at these times of collective labor is as rich fare as the owner can afford . . .§

[182] An underlying factor in the Dahomean *dokpwe* is awareness of itself as "the manpower of Dahomey," and the members regard themselves as exercising their fundamental privilege as Dahomeans. This attitude toward the coumbite continues to prevail in Haiti. Like the bounfor—but even more significantly in terms of routine, workaday life—the coumbite and the société are an expression of social ties and of the pervading interest in the common welfare.

476 178 461 533 Certain patterns of the coumbite have been carried over into nonagrarian labor in the towns and cities, wherever group work is required. The carrying of coffee and sugar bags in the warehouses, the loading of ships, and the repairing of roads—all are traditionally performed

§[(Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," *Africa*, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266-296. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst']

533

476 rhythmically, to the accompaniment of drums, *catas*, or horns, while a
178 singing leader composes topical songs in which the laborers join.

461 The tools which a rural Haitian chooses, and the way he uses them,
171 often are in a West African tradition. He performs a multitude of
412 tasks with his machete, or bush knife: weeding a garden, peeling an
orange, cutting down a tree, making a drum or mortar, opening a coco-
nut. It is an all-purpose tool, as it is in Africa. Until a few years ago it
was supplemented by the extra-long, heavier, "double machete." The axe
and the chisel are known and used too, but the machete is supreme.
492 The hoe is the tool for tilling the soil, even in the flat country, and even
[241] though the Haitian has horses and cattle which could pull a plow.
[412] Horses are for riding and not for pulling. In carrying loads, the Haitian
peasant still prefers the head to the shoulders. If he has a donkey, the
[538] donkey will carry for him. An old Haitian proverb goes: "Meçi Bondieu
pou' bourrique là, si nous pas gainyain bourrique là faut Haitien po'té
tout bagaille" (Thank God for the donkey, if we didn't have the donkey
489 the Haitian would have to carry everything)." Generally speaking, the
[illegible] rough and rocky terrain of Haiti and inadequate secondary roads have
493 done nothing to encourage the use of carts or wagons.

Corn is stored in the trees, as in West Africa, or in granaries built
171 upon stilts, also as in West Africa. The Haitian makes his fire in the
[251] African fashion, with several long sticks or poles meeting point-to-point
[372] in the heart of the fire. As the ends are consumed, the sticks are pushed
[252] toward the center. Grain is pulverized in large wooden mortars, as
[226] in West Africa, and winnowed in a woven tray. Fish traps are some-
[227] times woven in the traditional West African manner, and fishermen often
set their nets in converging spirals and beat the water with sticks to
[501] drive the fish to the center. And on the rivers and lakes are to be seen
dugout canoes of a kind familiar on the inland waters of West Africa.

171 The folklore of the fields contains many themes known to the West
241 African. One old Haitian farmer, discussing the spiritual relationship
of the planter to the earth, declared that a man must be strong and
potent when he plants, else the crops will be vitiated and sickly. For
[834] this reason, he said, a man must not plant seeds the day after he has
had sexual intercourse, because he has been temporarily drained of his
life-giving powers.[9]

171 The tale of the hoe that worked by itself in the fields is also wide-
538 spread. It enters many animal and Bouki stories, and also is known
in a form that is familiar in West Africa. In this story, there was once
a man who owned a hoe which worked by itself whenever a magical
formula was pronounced. It would stop working whenever the magical

[9] [For footnote, see Category 116, P 352.-- Analyst]

[P.122]

10. The Arts– Flour, Wood, and Iron

177 It is the nonmaterial arts and traditions that have thrived best in Haiti
178 through the years of slavery, political unrest, and poverty. Religious con-
53 cepts, music, dancing, folk tales, proverbs, and games are found every-
567 where in profusion. Material arts of the past have fared less well. Today, nothing is left of the old African knowledge of wood carving, metal casting, appliqué work, and weaving. Why such major African arts have died out in Haiti is no mystery. They disappeared simply because there was no place for them under the slave system or in the new Haitian society which followed it.

177 Under the colonial masters, the demands made on the New World
178 African were for coffee, cotton, and indigo. His creative talents were
567 channeled into carpentry, masonry, and the building of facilities for
532 production. There were no traditional artistic outlets or patrons for the wood carver, and no need for the weaver. Nor, during the years of slavery, was there much leisure for the craftsman to do his work even for the fun of it, should he be so inclined; indeed, this approach to wood carving or any other art would have been little understood or appreciated by most West Africans. A man who made an art object purely and simply to express a creative urge rather than to fill an express need would have been regarded as slightly eccentric. The old West African wood carvings with which we are now familiar were made because they were *required* for some purpose. A figure of a deity was needed in a shrine, a carved protective guard was needed for the household, a grave marker or a ceremonial mask was obligatory.

177 In Haiti the needs of those who ruled were different. The slave with
178 knowledge of the forge was not put to work making spears, ceremonial
567 axes, and the like; he was assigned the task of making grillwork for
326 houses, hinges and bolts, iron tires for coach wheels, and metal parts for the sugar mills. The anonymous African ironworker did his job well.

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies 175
knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thou- 178
sands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the 326
roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no 648
matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in 326
the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, 778
made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to 178
standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both [184]
single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords [534]
and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled [171]
iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized [776]
or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade.[1]

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic 322
decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is 531
on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle*, and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly
utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, 323
uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of
glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a wari 524
gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, 322
without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in ap- 501
pearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that 531
esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or [517]
alfor, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm [482]
and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Dec- [285]
orated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta [386]
dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some com- 531
munities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted 353
with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar [184]
bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

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[1] [See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

machetes, circles, mortar shapes, and so on—each with its own specific 788
meaning. Sometimes the vèvè becomes openly pictorial, and there 532
emerges a ship for the loa Agwé, snakes for Damballa and Ayida, a bull for the loa Taureau, a knapsack for the loa Azaka, or even a portrait of a deity, perhaps smoking a pipe or holding a sword.

The vèvè is not a permanent record. It is made as an act of supplication or veneration, and once it is finished it has no further value. In the ensuing ritual and dance, the vèvè is obliterated by the feet that pass across it. At the hands of one houngan, this invocational act results in a crude, even childlike, design. At the hands of another, it produces a drawing of beauty, integration, and highly developed form.

The drum-making craft, too, has offered an unbroken sequence of 178
opportunity for satisfying artistic urges. The drum has a traditional form 534
that cannot be tampered with; its shape is predetermined by its function, 531
by the log from which it is hewn, and by existing standards. And yet, the drum maker has found it an object on which he can devise new decorative motifs, and he may even give it personal uniqueness. Some drums have styles that may be associated with specific regions of the country, others bear the stamp of the individual artist. Paint has been used on Haitian drums for a hundred years or more as a complement to carving. One assotor drum dating from the earliest days of the Republic, and now preserved in a collection owned by the Bureau of Ethnology in Port-au-Prince, is decorated with a medallion showing the Haitian coat of arms, grenadiers, red and yellow snakes, and a sun with a face. This magnificent instrument, apparently the only one of its age and kind to have survived the years, is one of Haiti's art treasures.

The *couis*, or calabash bowl, of the hounfor rites is another object which 322
is decorated with motifs. Abstract designs, ritual symbols, and some- 531
times human and animal figures are painted on the inner or concave [532]
surface of the bowl.

The rural traditional arts of Haiti have had a belated impact on the 184
arts of the city. Within the past fifteen years there have appeared a 531
number of painters, sculptors in wood and ceramics, and ironworkers 532
who constitute an art movement sometimes referred to as the Haitian 32
"renaissance." Many of these artists draw heavily on national lore and legend for inspiration and subject matter. Some of them are men who came only recently from villages or distant farms. Their work adorns many public buildings in Port-au-Prince and is eagerly sought by art collectors. Members of the elite class who once looked with embarrass- [571]
ment on the "primitive" countryside are finding increasing respect for the potentialities of their country cousins.

[P. 126]

11. Dancing and Dance Drama

177 The dances of Haiti, like the loa, are almost beyond counting. Like the
● 178 loa, too, the dances have personalities of their own, sometimes too subtle
535 for the stranger to detect. If there is one valid generalization, it is that the inspiration for the Haitian dance is primarily African. There have been changes in the course of the more than four hundred years since the first Africans came to the New World. Some of the old dances have disappeared altogether; others have developed new characteristics. New dances came into being with European rather than African form. Some of the most traditional dances have become sparse and lean, stripped of the decorative pageantry of earlier days. There are also the French quadrilles and similar square dances which have survived since colonial days in remote parts of the mountains. But it is the quadrille and not the dance of African origin which is atypical in Haiti's folk culture. Dancing is deeply rooted in almost all the important events of Haitian life. It is one of the few arts that have survived from preslavery days.

535 Early European travelers in Haiti were greatly taken by the dances
178 they found there. Some observers, like Moreau de Saint-Méry, a French-
175 man born in Martinique, have left invaluable documentation of the dances of the late eighteenth century. Saint-Méry described many dances that are still known in modern Haiti, such as the Chica, the Calinda, the Vodoun, and the Pétro. From his accounts one may assume that these dances have not changed much to this day.

114 But many of the foreign authors and journalists of early days were astoundingly lacking in understanding and quick to bare their prejudices and to pronounce their moral judgments. Like the explorers of our own time who delight in "returning alive" from some jungle land and in commenting upon all the strange, bizarre, dangerous, and wicked things they think they have seen, the explorer of the Dark Island often described the Haitian as a depraved branch of the human species. One such ob-

Saint-Méry also wrote about some of the religious dances, which he 171
identified by name: 535

> In Santo Domingo, and especially in the western, French section, there has existed for a long time a kind of dance called the Vaudoux [Vodoun] . . . which is characterized by movements where the upper part of the body, the shoulders and the head seem to move convulsively. This dance is accompanied by the drums, the clapping of hands, and group singing . . .
>
> The Vaudoux is nothing compared to the Don Pedro . . . , another Negro dance, also known in the western part of Santo Domingo since 1768. Don Pedro was the name of a Negro of the Petit-Goave section, of Spanish origin, who by his daring character and certain superstitious practices, had acquired among the Negroes enough influence to be denounced by the government as the instigator of some alarming plots. The dance which bears his name consists, like the Vaudoux, in the shaking of the shoulders and the head, but this shaking is extremely violent, and to increase it still further the Negroes drink, while dancing, brandy in which they have mixed finely ground gunpowder . . .[5] They dance with the most horrible contortions, until finally they fall into a sort of epilepsy . . .[6]

Making allowances for Saint-Méry's imaginative interpretation of many 177
of the things he saw, the Haitian dance of today is not far different 178
from that of the eighteenth century. It is cast in the West African 533
mold, with Dahomean and Yoruban motifs predominating over European 535
and other Western infiltrations. As in Saint-Méry's day, the drummers (114)
sit at the edge of the dance court, a leader wielding a gourd rattle leads the singing, and the dancers and spectators constitute the chorus. The dancers usually move around the center of the court in a counterclockwise direction. Their steps and postures vary according to the type of dance being performed. The Jenvalo, for example, is danced with a bent back, hands touching the knees. In the Zépaule dance the dancers are erect, and most of the movements are made with the shoulders. In the Pétro (the Don Pedro described by Saint-Méry) there is a constant, almost agitated movement of the feet. The songs accompanying these cult dances, while presented in African style, may have hybrid or even French melodies, though in the main they are more African than European. The over-all context of the cult dances, as well as most of the secular ones, is West African, with constant interplay between the singers, dancers, and drummers. Sometime the dancers "drive" the drummers, sometimes the drummers "drive" the dancers. Certain beats of the drum are signals for special movements and postures. On hearing special beats or rolls, the dancers may leap vertically into the air, or perform a *laillé* (a swirling motion that causes the skirts to flare out), or a *djaillé* (excitement motions). Increased tension among the dancers may cause the drummers to shift the beat, or to increase

[5] [Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war. Cf. p. 352, Cat. 116.--Analyst.]

[6] Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238. Cf. p. 352, Cat. 116.--Analyst]

178 tempo. The chorus and leader sing responsively, their parts overlapping
533 in traditional African style. The shoulder movements, foot movements,
535 the way the arms are carried, and the typical posture of feet flat on
the ground, bent knees, and swayed back—all are of African derivation.

535 These postures and movements are broad and direct. There are few of the decorative and "fine" movements that one sees in the dances of Indonesia, Cambodia, and India. Where the Javanese lays stress on the pose of the hands and the delicate movements of the fingers, the Haitian dancer is concerned with the position of the arms and the motions of the shoulders. The Indonesian sense of poised balance or suspended movement is absent. In its place there is an attitude of strong frontal assault against natural forces such as gravity, or direct submission to those forces. There is almost always a feeling of solidity and stability in Haitian posture, and of a proximity between the body and the earth, but the total effect is dynamic. Indonesian dancing seems to express a comprehension of the unseen and the supernatural; Haitian dancing seems to express an intimate understanding of nature.

535 Dancing touches on virtually every aspect of life in Haiti. It plays a
78 part in the supplication of loa, the placation of the dead, and the making
796 of magic; in the consecration of a hounfor, the installation of a houngan,
527 and the initiation of cult members; in planting, harvesting, and house-
524 building. Catholic Church holidays, Nine Nights, baptisms, the election
182 of a new president, and ordinary social gatherings—all are celebrated, in
part, at least, by dancing.

535 Haitian dancing is participative rather than exhibitionistic. It is to join rather than to watch. There are some dances, however, which require special skills, and a few which are highly individualistic. Several types of dances are described elsewhere in this book. Verbal description cannot do justice to an art such as dancing, of course; but some brief sketches may help to suggest the differences between one Haitian dance and another.

In the Congo Mazonne, for example, men and women pair off and dance face to face, making contact occasionally but only briefly. The arms are stretched forward as though to embrace the partner around the waist, but the actual embrace never materializes. The partners dance sometimes as though they are unaware of each other and are simply part of a larger group; then they approach, move as mirrored reproduc-
[831] tions, and separate. Loin movement is free, and there is a restrained
sexual intensity, though direct sexual implications are not necessarily present. Sometimes the woman holds the hem of her skirt in her hands, while the man holds his jacket open toward his partner.

000
Mousondi. In present-day Trinidad there is a Calinda dance which 171
closely resembles the Mousondi; Puerto Rico has its Bomba Calindán; 535
and under another name the "battle dance" survives among Negro communities in Surinam. The counterpart of the Calinda in Brazil is the Capoeira, for which musical accompaniment is provided by African-style "belly harps" (musical bows with gourd resonators) called *berimbau*.
The tradition lingers on in Haiti in modern mock prize-fighting dances [178] ●
sometimes performed in Rara season.

The stick dance (*Battonie*) of the Haitian carnival season, mentioned in chapter 8, is of more than passing interest for the reason that almost identical dances have been reported from some areas of West Africa. In the Haitian dance (see fig. 73) the baton wielders, all males, for unexplained reasons are attired in women's clothing. A photograph made in 1958 of a baton dance among the Ewe people of Togoland depicts a scene scarcely distinguishable from a Haitian Rara performance, and it is noteworthy that its all-male cast is in women's dress.[7]

In addition, there remain a number of fragments of dances of the past. In religious ritual, on rare occasions, one may see animal dances in which the performers mimic animal movements, holding in their hands long sticks to simulate front legs. This type of dance has been reported frequently in West Africa, particularly in connection with totemic rituals.

There is a dance in the Arada ritual in which the loa Legba is in- 796
voked. A hounsi—usually a man—comes onto the dance court wearing 794
a kind of cane-crutch called the *baton* Legba, or Legba stick. The baton 535
is about the length of a cane, with a long, grotesquely twisted "handle" 171
that fits under the crotch of the legs. The dancer wraps one leg around the stick and walks as though he has only one foot. In the dance, he spins around on the stick, leaps, and pirouettes. Identification of the stick as well as the dance with Legba, and its position between the legs, seem clearly to relate it to the phallic sticks used in dances for Legba in Dahomey.

Among the secular exhibitionistic dances of Haiti, there is one in which 535
a man stands on his head and goes through erotic motions to the [831]
accompaniment of drums.

In addition to the almost countless dances of African origin or in- [171]
spiration, there is the ever-popular Meringue, a European-type social dance which is known in many forms. Haitian connoisseurs of this dance believe there are three main forms of the Meringue: the "Meringue de Concert," in which the rhythm is slow and "caressing"; the "dance Meringue," in which the rhythm is quasi-fast and very gay; and the "Meringue Coundjaille," in which the rhythm is very fast. The last

[7] [United Nations Photograph no. 62065. Cf p 352, category 116. -- Analyst]

535 The last form[1] is heard most often during carnival days. In all variations of the
Meringue, the dance is performed by couples in ballroom style. Among
[831] the elite, it is restrained. Elsewhere it is much more animated, with
free and uninhibited pelvic motions similar to those seen at the Saturday
171 night *bamboche*. Although the Haitian regards his Meringue as a national
177 popular dance, Spanish-type music has infiltrated heavily from the Do-
minican Republic, Cuba, and other islands of the West Indies. Thousands
53 of Haitians returning from contract labor in Cuba have brought with
them not only Cuban songs and rhythms but Cuban instruments as
well. It has not been a one-way affair, however, for the Arada cults of
eastern Cuba have been built substantially around immigrants from
Haiti, and in the Cuban mountains you may hear music and see dances
of Afro-Haitian origin.

Still other kinds of dances are to be found in remote villages of Haiti—the old folk dances of Europe. The villagers still know and perform the waltz, the polka, the mazurka and the quadrille, usually to the accompaniment of violins or guitars, or possibly an accordion.

But the influences are not all ancient ones. Jazz has infiltrated the Meringue. And some years ago a small boy asked me with some concern whether I had taken proper account of a very important dance called *le black bottom.*

535 Following is a list of dances known to Haitians today. Some of them
● [178] are found throughout Haiti, some are known only regionally, and a
few are on the verge of extinction.

DANCES CONNECTED WITH VODOUN RITUAL

Arada, or Rada: One of the main dances of the Vodoun service, named after the Dahomean city and cult center, Allada.

Anago, or Nago: Named after the Nagos, a branch of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria. For deities of Nago origin.

Mahi: Named after the Mahi people of Dahomey.

Déréal: A Mahi dance of northern Haiti.

Parigale: Another Mahi type of dance. Possibly from *pas régal* (royal step).

Jenvalo, or Yenvalo: A supplication dance, variously called Jenvalo Doba (*dos bas*, low back), Jenvalo Jénon (*genoux*, knees), and Dobado.

Zépaule: A supplication dance in which the movements are made primarily by the shoulders (*les épaules*). It is sometimes called Jenvalo Zépaule or Jenvalo Débout (standing Jenvalo).

Flavorodoun: Another type of shoulder dance known in the north.

Banda, or Chica: A gay and sometimes ribald dance, said to be much favored by the loa Cousin Zaka and the loa Gèdé.

Masonne Rada: The "Masonic" Rada dance; often danced for the loa Gèdé.

Carabienne or Crabienne: A rest dance, interspersed into long-drawn-out Arada

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[1] [i.e., the "Meringue Coundjaille" in which the rhythm is very fast.--Analyst]

13. Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs

*533 The African-style song of social criticism has found no worthier sub-
538 jects than the historic political figures of Haiti. There is no doubt that
626 the African slaves used this art form to express their feelings toward
● 178 the white masters as they had used it to comment upon the behavior of
their own chiefs and fellow tribesmen. The worthy leaders were praised
in song; the unworthy were castigated and their sins, failures, and
social misdemeanors publicized in folk songs. By the beginning of the
[567] nineteenth century, slavery had come to an end in Haiti. The deep
democratic sense of human dignity had outlasted the colonial masters
*533 and emerged tempered and sharp. The songs of criticism became not
538 only comments upon political figures but campaign propaganda as well.
626 They dwelt upon the accomplishments or faults of the candidates for
178 political office. Friendly songs sought out every virtue, and invented
666 others, in the man or woman being praised. Unfriendly songs lashed
out and lacerated or poked biting fun at the subject, not even sparing
his physical deformities.

*533 Yet the political songs are more than statements of merit or fault.
538 Cumulatively they are a kind of folk history of Haiti. No political
[666] aspirant ever went unsung by his peasant army, or unridiculed by his
opponent's followers. The songs the people sang about their heroes and
[173] their enemies recall events and details that formal history has forgotten
or ignored. The memory of the folk song is powerful and long. Some of
the recollections go back more than a century.

175 History books tell us that in December, 1843, Major Charles Hérard
642 aîné Rivière was elected to the office of the presidency, and that a new
[643] constitution was drawn up by the Constituent Assembly. The new constitution was an accomplishment of the liberal and democratic forces
of the nation. It guaranteed certain civil rights to the people. It provided
that judges be elected instead of appointed, abolished life terms for

175 But in The early days Meringue
643 piece called "Merci Papa Vincent" was very popular. According to the
*533 song, the noteworthy achievement of the President was the law he
*539 sponsored to drive the "Syrians" out of the retail trades:
563
444

Nous conné moune qui raimé peuple là,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous conné moune qui raimé peuple li,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous conné moune qui raimé peuple li,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous conné moune qui raimé peuple,
C'est Président Vincent!
A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous crié, merci Papa Vincent!

Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail là?
C'est Président Vincent!
Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail là?
C'est Président Vincent!
Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail là?
C'est Président Vincent!
A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!

We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

175 This song soon became the "official" musical theme of the President and
● 178 was heard in the carnival festivities, at salon dances, and at military
643 functions. But as discontent with Vincent grew, less adulatory versions
*533
*539

of "Merci Papa Vincent" sprang up in the side streets of Port-au-Prince. 175 178
One rendition (as translated) went: 643

We know the man who loves the people, 533*
He is Sténio Vincent! 539*
Who made my wife leave me to go to her family?
He is Président Vincent!
Who made my skin show through my worn out pants?
He is Président Vincent!
Who is the man who made my house fall down?
He is Président Vincent!
Oh, we call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

So widespread did the burlesques on the original become that the tune itself became suspect. One never knew which versions were running through the minds of the listeners.

In 1950, during the administration of President Estimé, there was a new public works program which provided employment for a good many needy people in the Port-au-Prince area, and a coumbite song of the period went: 175 643 533* 539* [653]

Président Estimé waille, oh!
Quembé pays yà pas lagué oh!
C'est Bondieu nans ciel là qui ba moin président!
C'est Bondieu nans ciel là qui ba moin président cila!
Quembé pays yà pas lagué oh!
Port-au-Prince oh tourné Havane oh! [Ex. 117]

President Estimé *waille*, oh!
Hold on to the country, don't let go, oh!
It is God in heaven who gave me this president!
It is God in heaven who gave me this president!
Hold on to the country, don't let go, oh!
Port-au-Prince, oh, is turning into a Havana, oh!

When Estimé was overthrown by a military coup, the melody lingered on, but the name of the protagonist was changed. [669]

No president of Haiti has served his term of office, either for good or bad, without providing the raw materials for a folk song. His heroic deeds, his failures, and his foibles are as likely as not to be perpetuated in the music of the people. 643 533*

As for the presidency itself, it is held in the highest esteem. A rousing salute song, reminiscent of the Marseillaise, sends every new president-elect on the way to the palace: [539]*

Président passé là,
L'ap monté au gouvernement!

[P.166]

15. Secret-Society Songs

575 Secret societies were once common in Haiti, as they were in other parts of
171 the New World where West Africans settled in large numbers. The institution
of the secret society was strong in various parts of West Africa from
which the slaves came. The tradition was particularly notable among the
tribes of Nigeria.[1] In the New World it offered to slaves and to freed
Negroes an opportunity for social organization and fraternal relationships
which otherwise had been pretty well shattered by the nature of slavery
and the profuse admixture of cultures. A number of elderly Haitians have
[648] suggested that it was the Haitian secret societies rather than the Vodoun
and Congo cults which fomented underground resistance and slave revolts
against the French in the last years of the eighteenth century.

174 At this late date it is difficult to reconstruct much of the secret-society
178 picture. Such groups as may have survived until recently did so in vitiated
575 and changed form. They have been supplanted in large measure by the
[476] *société*, a kind of mutual-aid association with both economic and recreational
functions. It is exclusive, but not irrevocably so, and it is not secret.
The société often corresponds roughly with the membership of a hounfor,
or cult temple.

575 Old people still talk about true secret societies, however. There was a
178 Moundongue secret society, separate from the Moundongue cult, whose
266 members were recruited from the survivors of the Moundongue tribe and
173 their descendants. Other secret societies were not based on tribal affiliation
but were recruited from the population at large. One such group was the
Vinbindingue, also known as the Blinbindingue and the Balbindingue.
Its practices were feared. According to tradition, the Vinbindingue was
predatory and held cannibalistic rites, as did other groups such as the
Moundongue Society, the Cochon Rouge (the Red Pig Society), the
Zeaubeaups, the Cochon Gris (the Gray Pig Society), and the Calinda
000 Society. How much of their reputation for cannibalism was deserved is

[1] [Herskovits, Dahomey, I, p. 256. Cf. p. 353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

How much of their reputation for cannibalism was deserved is
a matter of speculation. Bizarre tales told by the colonists, as well as rumors 173
and legends propagated about the societies by nonmembers who feared 575
them, did result in a body of folklore which portrays these groups as malevolent. 266
The societies themselves, no doubt, often supported such beliefs
to increase the awe in which they were held.

In modern Haiti, however, there is no secret or fraternal society of the 178 ●
kind that probably existed in prerevolutionary days. Nor is there anything 575
comparable to the Abakwa, or Carabali, an Ibo secret society that has
survived in Cuba.[2]

Curiously enough, the most significant noncult organization in Haiti 575
today is the Masonic order. Yet it has not remained distinct from the cults 794
but has become interwoven with them. Many Vodoun and Congo services
have rites or dances that are designated as Mazonne (Masonic). Houngans
often feel that affiliation with the Masonic order offers distinction and
prestige for the hounfor that the ordinary cult center does not have.

As for the Calinda, the Cochon Rouge, the Cochon Gris, the Zeau- 178
beaup, the Vinbindingue, and the Moundongue societies, they appear to 575
survive in name rather than in fact. The rumors and tales go on, as they do about zombies, devils and lou-garos. It is mostly at carnival time that their names are heard. A Mardi Gras band, appropriately costumed, may herald itself as a Calinda or a Cochon Rouge group. It will sing songs it regards as appropriate to the kind of effect it is trying to achieve. Such groups are not taken seriously. They are merely part of the carnival fun. But to members of older generations they do recall tales about the secret societies that met under the limbs of the mapou tree by torchlight to conduct their nocturnal affairs.

The songs that follow are reputed to belong to the Calinda, Vinbin- 533*
dingue, and Zeaubeaup societies; but they are infected with a frivolous 575
quality which suggests they may have been heard for the first time in the
carnival celebration rather than in the dark shadows of the mapou.

One of the legends concerning the Balbindingue, or Vinbindingue, is 533*
that of the dancing drum. The theme is a special one, but it is related to 539*
other stories about dancing calabashes in the Calbasse ritual and about 575
dancing hoes. This song describes a gathering at such a dance:

Balbindingue!
C'est là n'homme mwé yé!
Cimitière tonnerre!
Balbindingue!
C'est yun seul tambour qui dansé!
Pardon mon père!
Balbindingue!
C'est là n'homme mwé yé! [Ex. 124]

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[2] [See Courlander "Abakwa Meeting in Guanabacoa," Journal of Negro History, XXIX (1944), 461 ff. Cf. Cat. IIC, p. 353. -- Analyst]

dramatic art. The narrator interprets his characters as he goes along, 538
providing different voices, singing, giving humorous or tragic emphasis, and changing his facial expressions to convey the temper and mood of the protagonists. He imitates the movements and actions of the animals. In print, his broad gestures and sly intimations are all lost. The Haitian tale is a vehicle for the actor, who plays his theme according to circumstances and the responsiveness of his audience. The storyteller, like the musician, is likely to be found almost anywhere. But there are storytellers of special renown, known as *mait' contes*—who may be called upon to entertain young people at a party or Nine Night gathering. They have seemingly endless repertoires and can go on indefinitely telling tales about Bouki and Malice, or Jean Saute and Jean L'Esprit. In former times, [178]
the mait' conte used an instrument such as the *banza* to intersperse his [533]
narration with music. Old people recall that trough zithers and other in- [534]
struments of African design were once employed for this purpose.

Anansi, the spider trickster-hero and buffoon of West Africa, has survived 171
in Haiti as well as elsewhere in the Antilles. In Jamaica and other British 538
islands, Anansi has become Brother Anansi, Sister Nancy, or just plain Nancy. Although he usually figures in tales dealing with other animals, he has more and more come to assume a human form, as he has in Haitian tales. But in Haiti the name Anansi is only rarely heard. Anansi's cleverness and stupidity are now attributed to two characters named Ti Malice and Nonc' Bouki, both of whom are regarded as human beings.

In West Africa the spider hero directed his mischief against the great and strong creatures of the forest, now one, now another. In Haiti, Ti Malice, who has inherited Anansi's wit and guile, pits himself mostly against Bouki, who has inherited Anansi's stubborn nature and his pompous stupidities. Ti Malice (whose first name probably comes from the Spanish *tio*, uncle) has become the slick sharpy of the city, the clever and predatory "operator," the practical joker. Like his spider prototype, Ti Malice has humor as well as cunning, though he is often remorseless. Bouki is full of self-confidence but is slow-witted and an easy prey for Ti Malice. He is thought of as a clumsy peasant of the mountains. He has a constant desire to pit himself against Ti Malice, and a capacity for involving himself in utterly fantastic situations which appeal to the Haitian sense of the ridiculous.

In many respects this team of comedians resembles another pair known in South and Central America—Tio Conejo (Uncle Rabbit) and Tio Coyote; both are pranksters, but the rabbit usually manages to outwit the coyote. Ti Malice and Bouki also figure in the universal tar-baby story, and in many other tales known in the United States in which Br'er Rabbit

322 [412] The craft of drum making is a very skilled one, but the tools are simple: chisels, machetes, and fire. The core of the log is removed by burning and gouging, and the outside is shaped with a machete, or sometimes a hachet. The wood is selected and processed carefully. Firing of the core of the log depends a good deal on how dry the wood is, for the wood must burn slowly. It is believed that wood cut at the right stage of growth and at the right phase of the moon is resistant to the [824] ever-present powder-post beetles. Mahogany was once favored because it was durable and beetle resistant, even though it was heavy. But in recent decades mahogany has become scarce, and modern drums are made of lighter woods.

534 778 [531] [171] Drums made in the nineteenth century not only conformed to the patterns of certain West African prototypes but were also carved and decorated. Some of these old drums are still to be seen, but there are not many left. An ancient carved assotor drum (previously cited) has fortunately been preserved by the Bureau d'Ethnologie. But between the ravages of the powder-post beetles, age, and the periodic orgies of drum burning by the church and misguided public officials, most of these [648] ancient works of art have long since disappeared. During the American occupation of Haiti—from World War I to 1932—American military personnel also contributed to the mania for drum burning. And as late as 1941 there was a massive, cleric-inspired drive to wipe out these instruments as remnants of *sauvage* elements in Haitian life.

534 ● 178 531 The effect of this war against the drum was only to improve the business of the professional drum maker. Drums had become expendable, hence they were made simpler. The carved decorations disappeared. Paint was substituted, and less attention was given to detail. The important thing was to produce a good functional instrument. But the creative instincts of the drum makers sometimes still take over, and many of the modern drums are beautifully proportioned, with delicate geometric patterns carved around the base, or foot. Among certain categories of drums the painted decorations consist solely of the name of the loa to whom the instruments have been dedicated—St. Jacques perhaps, or Papa Pierre, or Ézilie.

534 171 794 796 Drums differ in design according to the use for which they are intended. The Arada or Vodoun drums are used primarily in connection with the dances and rituals of the Vodoun cult—the cult built around the gods and rites of Arada and Yoruba theology. They resemble closely drums which are used today in Dahomey, Nigeria, and Togoland. They 534 usually come in sets of three. The largest, the ***manman*** (also called ***hountor*** or ***hountogri***), may be three to four feet high. The middle-sized drum, or ***second*** (also called ***grondé*** or ***moyen***), is about two feet

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 193]

high. The smallest—the *bula*, or *bébé* (sometimes called *dundun*)—is 534
about eighteen or twenty inches high. They are all called sometimes by
the Yoruba name *bata*, originally applied to a two-headed instrument.

Arada drumheads are of cowhide, held in place by hardwood pegs
set into the bodies of the drums at an angle. The drums are tuned by [171]
driving in or loosening the pegs. Even the slitting of the skins where
the pegs pass through them is African in pattern. In Cuba the drums
of the Arada (there called Arara) cult are made in precisely the same
way, though they are used in batteries of four rather than three.

In a variation of the peg type of fastening, the skin is attached to a 184
hoop, which, in turn, is held in place by ropes laced to the pegs. Each 534
drum maker has his own preference as to the angle and size of the
pegs, the proportions of the drums, and the wood from which they are
made. One drum maker near Léogane claimed to be able to identify
the region from which a drum came by examination of the pegs and
the carvings around the base.

The small Arada drum, the *bula*, is usually "whipped" with two long 534
thin sticks to provide a sharp and penetrating sound. The middle-sized 171
drum is played with one bare hand and a stick. The stick may be
straight or bowed. The bowed drumstick is known as an *agida*, the name
used for the same type of stick in Dahomey.[1] On infrequent occasions
the *moyen* drum is played with two sticks—one straight and one bowed.
The large drum, the *manman*, is played by the most accomplished of
the drummers in the orchestra. He plays with one bare hand and one
stick, which may be of various forms. It may be straight, have a hook-shaped
head, or be mallet-shaped; or it may be the grotesquely twisted
stick known as a *baguette Guinée*. All these forms are known in Dahomey
and elsewhere in West Africa.

The three Haitian Arada drums, supplemented by an African-style 171
bell known as an *ogan* and small gourd rattles (cha-chas), form the 178
standard orchestra for most dances of the Vodoun cult. The *ogan*—the 534
forged iron bell with an external striker—has all but disappeared in 796
recent years, along with the institution of the village forge. In its place
one may see any kind of metallic object, such as a hoe blade, a link of
chain, or a length of pipe, all of which are referred to by the old name
ogan. In Cuba the Arada cult preserves the bell, both in single and
double form, under the same name. The word *ogan* probably derives
from the Yoruba term for this instrument, *eganran*.

Playing in concert, the three Arada drums produce a range of tones, 533
and the player of the *manman*—the chief of orchestra—adds to the 534
effect by frequently striking his stick against the side of the drum above

[1] [Herskovits and Herskovits, *Suriname Folk-Lore*, p. 87
The stick is also known in Suriname. Cf. p. 353,
Category 116. --Analyst]

534 [541] Among the noisemakers heard mostly at the time of the Rara festival (usually on Good Friday) are the ***von-von***, or bull-roarer—a thin flat piece of wood whirled on the end of a cord—and the ***rara***, the common wooden ratchet. Various types of wooden flutes, usually of bamboo, are also used.

[184] In the remoter parts of the mountains you may now and then hear of an instrument known as the ***banza***. A century ago, it would appear, the ***banza*** was a stringed instrument resembling a banjo. The similarity of names is striking, in view of the instrument's early form. [177] Today, however, the word ***banza*** is applied to the homemade fiddle which is used to accompany the minuet and other old dances of European origin.

534 524 178 A children's instrument seen sometimes in the mountains is constructed of half of a calabash shell, across the opening of which have been stretched a number of cords. This plucked device appears to be a decadent form of the African trough zither.

[pp. 203-313 not processed]

Chapter 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (*pp. 41–74*)

[1] Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the *prêt' savane*. 000

[2] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 165.

[3] Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Hayti.*

[4] Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro.

[5] Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.

[6] Account given by Voluska Saintvil. A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 69): "Trees are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man dare fell one for a canoe he must and invariably does sacrifice to its spirit and apologizes for the harm he is about to do it." [534] [778] [779] [771]

[7] The rite of *rafraîchi tête* is conducted periodically for a *mait' tête* after the original *lavé tête* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee. [782] [789] [823] [776]

[8] Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 233.

[9] It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form.

[10] Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 264.

Chapter 6: *Songs of the Peristyle* (*pp. 75–94*)

[1] This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following excerpt from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk-Lore* (p. 689): 171 532 539 794 795 776

I have no mother there,
I have no father there,
I have no sister there,
I haven't got anybody there.

Chapter 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts* (*pp. 95–104*)

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[1] Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 97.

[2] Note the coincidence of the term *gris-gris* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as *mojo*, or "voodoo" charm. [776] [869] [891]

[3] Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 503.

[4] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 243.

Chapter 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings* (*pp. 105–109*)

[1] Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 42.

[2] Marionettes of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic marionette, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan. [171] [541] [536]

Chapter 9: *Land and Work* (*pp. 110–121*)

[1] Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, p. 362.

[2] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 300 ff., describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and 583 171 595 423 178

583 171 593 423 relations between the husband and the wife's family, it is nevertheless commonplace for men who can afford it to have more than one wife.

[184] [3]Simpson, in "Sexual and Familial Institutions in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist*, October-December, 1942, p. 656, observes that in northern Haiti there are three distinct types of plaçage. "A *femme-caille* shares her mate's house, while a *maman pitite* is a woman who has born children for a man without living in his house. A *femme placée* does not live in her consort's house, and she has given him no children." Although none [428] of these women has any legal rights of inheritance, Simpson notes, "moral claims to a man's property stand in descending order for these three classes of placées."

600 [4]Johnston, *The Negro in the New World.*

[5]UNESCO, *The Haiti Pilot Project*, p. 18.

[6]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 515.

171 241 533 461 [7]The group work patterns of Haiti show a common ancestry with Negro gang work patterns in the United States. While nothing as formalized as the coumbite persists among American Negroes, similarities are striking. The emphasis on rhythm, the swinging of hammers or picks in union, the need for a singing leader, the responsive chorus, and the frequent use of some kind of percussion to keep time, all derive from a common concept of the nature of group work.

600 [8]Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," *Africa*, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266–296.

171 294 834 [9]Cardinall, *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 109), observes that among the Krachi people of Togoland "no man may have sexual intercourse with a woman for seven days before he goes hunting."

171 538 [10]An Ashanti story told by Rattray in *Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales* credits the hedgehog with owning the original hoe; according to this version, the hoe escaped across the sea to the country of the white men, who then possessed the secret. Afterward, the white men brought many hoes to Ashanti.

600 CHAPTER 11: *Dancing and Dance Drama (pp. 126–136)*

[1]Quoted in Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 73.

[2]Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word *banza* to *banjo* appears to be more than a coincidence.

[3]Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and 'Danse,'" *Dance Index*, October, 1946, p. 238.

[4]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[5]Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war.

[6]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[7]United Nations photograph no. 62065.

171 535 476 [8]Students of United States Negro life will recognize the word *coundjaille* as a variant of *coonjine*, a dance known on the lower Mississippi. According to one observer, Dr. Willis James of Spelman College, Atlanta, small Negro boys on the docks used to call to the boat passengers:

"Throw me a nickel
Throw me a dime
If you want to see me
Do the coonjine."

The term *coonjine* is still used to mean hand-loading of cotton bales on river boats. When this loading was done mainly by hand some years ago, the stevedores worked rhythmically in a line and sang. An old man from Louisiana testified that within his own memory the dockside *coonjine* was accompanied by makeshift drums and other percussion.

114 treatment. In the absence of sufficient analytic material on the inter-
121 vening years since his book was written, a prefatory note such as this
can do little more than comment on Haitian society, either in terms
of its present design or in terms of the recent events that may have
modified it.

121
114 The central thesis of Leyburn's book is that Haitian society is sharply
565 divided into two segments, and that the national institutional struc-
ture is such that no significant alteration in that division has occurred
[178] in the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the
base of the society is the rural agricultural sector, making up perhaps
as much as 95 per cent of the population; at the top the elite, which
dominates the governmental apparatus and all national institutions.
These two segments of the society differ, in Leyburn's view, in all
important regards: level of income, source of income, education,
language, religion, social forms, values and attitudes, and all else. By
carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the
revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, he reveals
both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means em-
ployed for its perpetuation. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap
which separated yeomanry and elite that he chose to label these social
segments castes rather than classes. Members of the elite earn their
livings as rentiers, merchants, professionals, and in government, and
never engage in manual labor of any sort. They are predominantly
urban in residence; their sons attend private lower schools, and then
[191] go on to higher education, usually abroad. They are French-speaking,
[177] although they also speak Creole, Haiti's national language. Elite re-
[58] ligion is Catholicism, elite forms of marriage and domestic organiza-
[59] tion are "legitimate" and "western." Elite members view themselves
[829] as a kind of aristocracy, and feel little commonality in their sharing of
Haiti and of Haitian history with the yeomen.

In sharp contrast, the yeomanry is rural, poor, works the land, is
114 illiterate and Creole-speaking only, believes in *vodoun* rather than in
565 orthodox Catholicism, usually marries by common law and is some-
191 times polygynous, and remains substantially isolated from the outer
771 world. Finally and importantly—though its particular significance is
583 changing—the elite differs from the rural sector in that the country-
595 man is predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the
144 elite are prevailingly lighter-skinned.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

throughout the country, the central administration remains in the 625
capital; urban units are dispatched to the countryside at times, if any show of internal political resistance is sensed. TTM members also sometimes engage in struggles with each other over political spoils; but too little is known to analyze internal strains within this paramilitary, secret-police organization. The TTM has proved particularly useful for carrying out the murders of outspoken individual political opponents and for crushing draconically any threat of strikes in the Port-au-Prince business community.

Little is known of the antecedents of TTM members. While it is 178
customary among the elite to describe these myrmidons as "trash," 625
some of them are literate, have some education, vaunt a political ideology—a kind of nationalist-*négritude* mystique, with strong Fascist elements—and differ dramatically from the ragged, illiterate followers of the warlords of pre-1915 Haiti. In fact, the TTM lieutenants are a direct, if somewhat deformed, product of the Estimé regime, a decade of structurally unsound prosperity, a culturally nationalistic ideology, and, more remotely, of the United States occupation itself.

With regard to the army, Duvalier has followed a policy of careful 643
attrition. While the United States Marine Corps "mission" was 701
(probably unknowingly) serving to immobilize opposition, Duvalier began to change the character of the army general staff. In the course of less than seven years he completely revamped the leadership of the army five times; this process not only kept the colonels off balance but allowed the President to reward loyal younger followers—principally those with dark skins, it is said—with rapid promotions.

The relationship between the Duvalier regime and the Catholic 642
clergy has been one of increasing alienation. At times members of the 795
clergy stood high in the regime, two having even served as members 661
of the cabinet; but not the slightest Church resistance has been tolerated. The low point in Duvalier-Church relations was the interruption of a mass by an armed TTM unit in downtown Port-au-Prince; leading members of the hierarchy later were summarily ejected from the country, and the Jesuit order was banned. Church power has waned significantly, both in the capital and in the countryside, as the regime has consolidated itself. Some observers believe that Duvalier is not so unwise as to aim at the complete elimination of the Church, but that he hopes instead to "nationalize" the clergy on some mutually agreeable basis.

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new ways. The virtual extirpation of indigenous culture, however, 177
occurred in few areas outside the New World; it was particularly 174
characteristic of the coastal and lowland areas of this hemisphere.
Hence, Caribbean culture is almost entirely transplanted and recently 177
synthesized. In the Caribbean area, an additional distinction lay in the 174
persistently colonial character of the islands and in the effects of this 563
colonialism on local life. Wherever the plantation flourished, large
populations of African origin grew out of the original importations of
slaves. This was true from the southern United States to Brazil, but
was especially marked in the islands, where local populations of European
extraction were either absent or reduced by the spread of the
plantation. Only in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Santo Domingo, and in 171
some of the smaller islands that developed no plantation system, were 563
substantial proportions of Europeans to be found. In Haiti, the early 174
cultural admixture of Colonial Spanish and Indian was soon swamped
by the cultures of Africa, and the European cultural component became
predominantly French after 1697, when the western third of
Hispaniola—today's Haiti—was ceded to France.

But Haitian society did not come to be purely African, in any 174
sense, nor is that society more than broadly similar to the other so- 177
cieties of the Caribbean. The kind of society in which the French
masters and their African slaves met and mixed, and the subtropical, 178
colonial environment in which they lived, imposed their own conditions
for culture growth. What the Haitian people could keep as a
living part out of the African past was limited by the regimen of
slave plantation life; what they could borrow or copy from their
masters was affected by the nature of the social relationships between
those who held power and those who had to bend to it. Ultimately,
independence meant that the Haitian people could employ what they
already knew and practiced under slavery, but in a wholly new
social setting.

The substantial isolation that followed independence led to slowed 175
change, both social and cultural, and to the gradual spread of the yeo- 177
man way of life throughout rural Haiti. From 1804 until the United 178
States occupation, Haiti was probably less affected by external de-
velopments than any other country in the hemisphere. In this regard, 171
its social history is noticeably different from that of the other Caribbean
islands, some of which, like Puerto Rico and Cuba, were forcibly
brought back into the mainstream of world developments in the

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175 same century in which Haiti withdrew. The yeomanry of Haiti in
177 the nineteenth century was hence able to develop a traditionalism of
178 unusual firmness and persistence.

171 This traditionalism, however, has had a high price. The economic
productivity of the rural cultivator has not risen; it can be argued
433 convincingly that poor land use, erosion, and population growth
311 have meant lower levels of consumption for the common people in
161 1966 than obtained a hundred years or more ago. The rural masses,
565 though overwhelmingly consisting of landholders, have been unable
-178 to break out of a stagnation that is economic as well as cultural. Such
stasis has been based to some extent on the limited responsiveness of
-175 the rural folk to outside stimulus. But also important in maintaining
114 the past is the national institutional system that took on its characteristic
511 shape after 1804, and under which the rural masses still live. That system, the origins of which Leyburn has examined and assessed with such care, is controlled, as we have seen, by a numerically small segment of the national population that is markedly distinct from the yeomanry itself.

-565 The nature and internal differentiation of the elite needs much more study, though it seems clear already that it is by no means a single solidary class embracing all but the yeomen. Whatever the structure of the elite, the relationship between the yeomen on the one hand and the real holders of power on the other must be understood if one is to understand Haiti. The yeoman is defined in terms of the elite; he is dependent upon it and subject to it. This is what is meant when it is said that the yeomanry, like the elite, forms only a part-society. Yet without the yeomen, there would be no elite. The elite live by controlling and taxing the rural masses, and find their sustenance and their power in rural productivity. Elite and yeomen, then, are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in Haiti as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. In such cases, the political role of the yeomanry is usually minor, and few opportunities may arise for the expansion of its political strength.
565 If the yeomanry fails to increase its productivity in ways that enable it
-433 to control more of its own surpluses, its role in affecting national political
664 decisions may grow narrower rather than wider, and this ominous
642 possibility has become a worldwide phenomenon. It becomes
more intensified wherever industry and trade grow, unaccompanied by parallel growth in yeoman productivity or in new and more widely representative national institutions.

311 bean country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin America.
423 The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few
171 large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots
and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Compared
433 with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most
● 178 mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeomanry
is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to
change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be realized
241 are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20–26). Yeomen cultivate
177 with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market
185 commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from
434 items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence.
While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop
choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence
orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially
sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma
sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and
423 rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect:
823 gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family
471 members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is
good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common
in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to
land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to
landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that
is, even when the capital and labor power to
work it are lacking.

114 Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land
175 acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in
423 ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore
the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon
failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their
own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French
tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size
of holdings. In spite of some plantation developement after the United
States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in
small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the
breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small landholders—is
462 nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.

443 As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its womenfolk market. Nearly

any usual measure. But Haitians do produce by traditional craft meth- 463
ods a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life.
In the countryside it is possible to see many persons engaged, mostly
on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industry that have [282]
their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating
small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners, and operators [339]
of small lime kilns that produce building material, are found in every [325]
village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of
archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, [322]
buttons from bone; carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of [326]
baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls, [313]
mortars and pestles, tool handles and spoons from local woods; dip- [322]-
pers, pots, and candelabra from tin cans; and sandals from tires and
inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manu-
facture simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappear-
ing tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest [294]
sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for use and for
sale. Along the coasts there are dugout-makers, shipbuilders, and sail- [396]
and seine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, 435
are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made [352]
by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immi-
grants brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has [415]
been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported 463-
shoes with their attached prestige, until recently, *vitièlo* was a collo- [294]-
quial term for shoe, coming from the name of the most famous of [177]
those Italian cobblers. [291]

One of the striking features of Haiti's craft traditions is its relative 463-
stability since the revolution. It was under slavery that Haitians first
became "westernized," learning what were then standard French 177
craft practices, adjusted to local colonial conditions, probably with 178
some modifying features coming from the African past. It was before 257
the revolution that the Haitian people learned and stabilized their 274
consumer tastes, agricultural and craft standards, and work proce-
dures. Such preferences and standards were worked out primarily in
terms of the demands of the plantation regime itself; but even the
most repressive social system leaves some opportunity for accultura-
tion. Today's sugar-making shops and rural rum distilleries employ
techniques centuries old and little modified over time. Housebuilding 342
and woodworking techniques in the countryside are substantially 322-
178-

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322 unchanged from an earlier era. The prevailing quality of Haitian
178 rural and craft industry, then, is one of great stability and conservatism.

493 At the same time, of course, major events since the revolution have
463 left their imprint on this part of life. Hardly a roadside village in
Haiti today, for instance, lacks an automobile mechanic, even though
these men are mostly self-educated and work with hardly any tools.
Their skills became part of Haitian culture in this century and are of-
383 ten of a simple order no longer typical of more developed areas. Tire
tubes, for instance, are "vulcanized" by the use of an ingenious de-
177 vice made from a board and an old piston, kerosene providing the
heat to make the seal; this technique, along with the sewing of damaged truck tires, was almost certainly introduced and diffused by the
United States Marines.

47 But these quaint additions do not alter the fact that shop and fac-
31 tory industry are nearly absent, and extractive industry virtually non-
178 existent. Haiti's one alumina extraction enterprise, foreign-owned, is
now shut down. There is but one flour mill, and that is foreign-
[258] owned as well. One or two textile mills and sugar factories, estab-
[339] lished with foreign capital, still function, as do a modern cement
factory and a few other small plants established in the 1950s. These
[464] industries, scanty as they are, were of great importance to Haiti, since
they represented substantial investments, held out the promise of reduced dependence on imports in significant categories, and contributed to the beginnings of an industrial proletariat. However, they involved only a tiny fraction of the national labor force, and they have not proved entirely successful. As a result, Haiti lacks any reserve of labor acquainted with modern industry, even though many people, both urban and rural, work at tasks that might be considered more industrial than agricultural.

47 Most important for the present discussion, the minor developments
433 in Haitian industry have not led to an expanded market and have not
178 resulted in any firm increase in productivity. Industrial growth, in
171 the sense in which it has occurred in countries such as those of Western Europe—or for that matter in Mexico or Argentina—is entirely
lacking. The absence of such growth is perhaps especially significant
if Haiti be compared with a neighbor such as Jamaica or Puerto Rico.
[648] These countries, one now independent, the other a North American
dependency—have both gained real increments from the investment
activities of outsiders;

433 activities of outsiders; Haiti has experienced few such increments, even
as a result of the United States occupation. Its citizens cannot readily
47 migrate anywhere; its educational system cannot prepare its people
171 adequately for the modern world; its civil service has proved neither
178 stable nor reliable; its labor force has limited experience with the fac-
648 tory system; and even two decades of active North American intervention did nothing to remake the economic and political structure of the nation. In more recent years, some of the "development projects" foisted on the people of a sovereign Haiti by foreigners working with Haitian officials would not have been tolerated by the colonial representatives of any foreign power obligated to report its activities before the United Nations Trusteeship Council. In view of these things, one is tempted to claim that Haiti has suffered from all the disadvantages of political sovereignty while enjoying none of its advantages.

Unlike those colonial dependencies that were able, over time, to develop internal political ideologies through which to face the pressures imposed by the colonial powers, Haiti was tested by hardly any challenge but its own lack of development. In this sense only can it be said that the freedom Haiti had won in an incredible revolution against powerful enemies came to be a punishment. The struggle brought the Haitian people justified admiration in many quarters, but its price has been isolation and virtual abandonment.

648 It was the United States occupation that made a lie of Haitian sov-
72 ereignty, and even of the invincibility of its people. The Haitian
"bandits," variously estimated to have numbered from 2,000 to
6,000, who died in what is probably best described as a war of resist-
ance against the North Americans, were barely able to maintain even
a brief local conflict against several well-armed companies of United
States Marines. Yet that occupation gave Haiti little in return for its
denial of the claim of national sovereignty. The public works and re-
form programs instituted by the United States, designed to give the
country roads, schools, hospitals, a disciplined army, a "legitimate"
government, and a schooled civil service, hardly endured longer than
the occupation itself, since nothing had been done to transform the
social and economic base of the society. Within a decade of the
North American withdrawal, the gleaming superstructure the occu-
000 pation created had begun to decay. The major effect of North Amer-

The major effect of the North Amer-
648 ican tenure seems to have been to make possible a much more telling
642 centralism in political control than had been operative in Haiti at any
time since the fall of the Christophe regime; and the consequences of this change are still being felt.

241 Small-scale rural cultivators are famous for their tendency to con-
565 fine their consumption to culturally conventionalized levels—that is,
433 to live as their predecessors lived before them. Though they are in-
● 178 volved in commercial spheres larger than the communities in which
185 they live, they seek to limit that involvement and to maintain their
511 cash expenditures at a low level. It is in this sense that Haiti might be
472 called a "quasi-capitalistic" society. To put it another way, yeomen
of this sort do not seek to change or to expand their production—rather, they aim to conserve a way of life set by tradition. The ideology of resistance to social and cultural change is one of the major obstacles to development; but it would be rash to damn such an ideology without reflection. In Haiti, for instance, there has long been pressure upon the rural masses to expand their production of coffee, the major export crop. However, this pressure has not been accompanied by any serious grass-roots attempt to improve coffee production or to offer genuine incentives to the cultivators. The yeomanry has no assurance at all that any expansion of effort will lead to gains *for them*; and they are little prepared to invest such effort merely because they are told that it will be good for Haiti. In fact, it is likely
[439] that the production of subsistence crops has expanded in recent years
at the cost of coffee production, for the yeoman knows that he can at least be sure of eating and of selling locally such crops as maize, sorghum, and yams, regardless of what may happen in Port-au-Prince or to the world coffee market. This view, combined with the yeoman's painfully acquired distrust of those who prate at length concerning his welfare, has meant a virtual stagnation of agricultural export production, even though the whole land quite literally depends on this production in order to progress.

241 The effect of this rural resistance is to create an apparent very sharp
565 difference in goals between countryman and bureaucrat. It is per-
433 fectly understandable that the countryman should fail to see the con-
185 nection between heightened coffee production and a higher level of
public welfare and social services. His experiences hardly persuade him that it is his surplus-producing capacity that underlies the kind and quality of public institutions with which the state provides him.

241 Nor does his effort in producing more and better cash crops translate
565 itself directly into higher consumption, since he has no say in setting
185 the price for his coffee. Under the circumstances, it is naïve to sup-
433 pose that "education" alone can make the yeoman's role in economic
or political development a more active one. The disposition to maintain a habitual level of consumption, rather than to believe that an increase in productivity will result in expanding services or improved consumption, is difficult to change; and the quasi-capitalistic quality of Haitian agricultural production is merely one way of saying as much. Economic change, in this sense, has to depend partly on changes in attitudes toward production. Until an agricultural extension service worthy of the name is able to make a massive attack on the shortcomings of yeoman cultivation in Haiti, this conservatism will perpetuate itself. And agricultural extension will not be able to wage this battle for change—even when its services become adequate in quality and quantity—unless the promises of greater economic rewards or of improved social services for the rural masses are occasionally honored.

47 The term "quasi-capitalistic" has much less force, of course, when
433 applied to urban enterprise. But there, too, economic activity has a
curiously static quality when compared to enterprise in more devel-
565 oped countries. The Port-au-Prince capitalist is famous for "playing
● 178 it safe." Import-export trade, tourist hotels, guided tours, gas stations, and urban slum real estate are more rewarding spheres of investment than shops or commercial farms. A small but economically important Syrian-Lebanese-Italian group limits its local investment accordingly, as do most of those "native" Haitians who carry on their businesses in the towns and cities. Elite families consist largely of siblings who interlock their economic activities with government, the military, agricultural processing and exporting, consumer-goods importing, tourist-connected services, and the professions. A slum block, a post in the ministry of tourism, a colonelcy, or a tour agency, can be a lucrative investment; few indeed are the Haitians prepared to take the risks needed to develop highly productive farms, to produce improved strains of poultry, or to introduce industrial skills through a modern machine shop. And the reasons for this lack of verve and daring are easy to find. Governmental instability, excessive
[648] taxation, lack of access to markets, and the absence of roads, communication, small-scale credit facilities, and the like mean that special

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648 intrepidity in enterprise is required. It is striking that those foreign captains of industry—mainly from the United States—who invest in Haiti, expect (and often get) governmental guarantees of a sort they could not dream of in their own countries; in this regard, they merely conform to Haitian expectations.

433 47 178 Haiti's problems, then, are not simply those that face any less developed country, vast though such problems may be. Nor is it intelligent to lay Haiti's problems at the feet of the nation's present rulers. The structure of the national economy has not changed significantly during the past twenty-five years—except that boom years could provide a temporary aura of prosperity—regardless of the philosophy 648 or popularity of the regime in power. If nothing else, the present nadir of Haiti's fortunes demonstrates that United States aid averag- 652 ing twelve and a half million dollars yearly over more than a decade 433 has produced no enduring improvements of any kind. It may further demonstrate that, shockingly poor as the country is, it emphatically does not depend on such aid. As of 1964, the regime in power was operating on a monthly budget of $1,800,000, only $400,000 of which went for purposes other than salaries. In other words, the ministries [511] do little more than perpetuate themselves unchanged. The yeomanry, living near subsistence level, continues to produce most of what it needs, while restricting its cash expenditures even more severely than in the past. The risks—in terms, say, of public health—of running a society under these circumstances are great; but there is no reason to suppose that regimes of the Haitian sort will be destroyed or improved by a show of popular unrest originating in the countryside. [369] Difficult as life is for the Haitian countryman, and no people in Latin America lives more poorly, the real pinch is probably being experienced more acutely among the city folk than among their rural fellow citizens. It matters politically, therefore, who these city folk are and what they do.

463 167 To begin with, there has been a significant loss of professional people, almost all of whom were urban, through migration and exile, especially since 1958. Haitian doctors, dentists, and other professionals are widely scattered today, both in the developed and the less developed countries of the world. Former army officers, journalists, diplomats, businessmen, and academicians have fled political repression, perhaps with the hope of eventually returning to their own country.

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457 country. The complete enfeeblement of tourism has also led to some
445 migration and to an accompanying decline of services and service
668 "industries" in the capital. These losses have surely hurt Haiti and
642 have damaged its chances for growth as well as its capacity to main-
66 tain the health, education, and morale of its people. It is not clear,
167 however, to what extent such changes may have produced a negative political reaction to the Duvalier regime. Urban support for Dr. Duvalier appears to have come from some intellectuals, from some army officers, and from portions of the urban lower classes; but numerically most important were those low-paid but literate and aspiring wage-earners whom the Comhaire-Sylvains (1959) refer to as "Class III" members. These observers have stressed that the Class III group consisted mainly of industrial employees, those engaged in food-processing, hotel services, workshops, and the like. It was this group that the Comhaire-Sylvains credited with the Duvalier victory in 1957, pointing out in addition that "in the small country towns almost all officials, both civil and military, and traders, seemed to belong to this class" (p. 185). If the economic crisis that has gripped Haiti in recent years severely affects the position of this class, the political situation will reflect as much. But the ideology of Class III members—so far as it can be inferred at all—would suggest that one Duvalier may merely be replaced by another. At the same time, the depopulation of those groupings whose members might have led a qualitatively different kind of opposition, during the period of tenure of the United States Marine Corps Mission to Duvalier, may have indefinitely postponed the opportunity for creating a genuinely new political direction.

66 To state it another way, there are no signs at this time that the re-
● 178 gime in power will be pulled down by any organized Haitian opposition. More important, since regimes resting on a narrow popular base have a way of falling without change, there is no indication that within Haiti's present national institutional structure, a genuine opposition to Duvalier-type governments can take shape. This means that even if regime should follow regime in rapid succession, there is little reason to expect that any of them could effect fundamental changes in Haitian society. If such an interpretation is correct, it presupposes an internal equilibrium or stasis so strong that no force for change in half a century has been able to make a politically significant difference.

114 This pessimistic view is supported by what is known at this time

121 tomed to hang our knowledge of the growth, development, and decay of social institutions. Whether the book be classified as social history or as sociology is largely a matter of indifference, for the line between those subjects can hardly be drawn without doing violence to comprehensive insight. To view a people with understanding in the characteristic setting of their institutions—marriage, religion, property arrangements, and the rest—one needs not only a description of their ways, but also a knowledge of how they came to be what they are.

167 178 563 Two centuries ago nine tenths of the Negro ancestors of the modern Haitians were still in Africa, living under the mores of their own localities, and for the most part entirely unacquainted with the mores of the Western World (or, as we ethnocentrically call it, the "civilized" world). First transplanted as slaves to the Caribbean island, then gaining their freedom after some mixture of blood with the white French, the Haitians have built up not only a state but a Haitian culture. The problems to be discussed in this book are as follows:

114 What social structure was set up after the independence in 1804, and by what methods? This question calls for a description of the economic, political, religious, marital, and class organization of the Haitians.

How did this structure function during the next century? There is often a difference between a people's expressed intentions and their ability to carry them out: a state sometimes borrows from some other power a type of constitution which, though logically admirable, does not work effectively under local conditions.

Which structural and functional elements of Haitian life were social heritages from the African past; which were taken over from French models; which were mergings of the two, and which seem to be variations newly produced on Haitian soil?

178 The great leaders of early days, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion and Boyer, made an effort to direct Haitian economic and political life along definite lines; however, the pressure of daily life, the necessity of feeding half a million people most of whom had had no experience in solving complicated problems of any sort, soon made it obvious that logical social structures would not long remain logical. The ways evolved were characteristically Haitian; ways in general unplanned, grow-

ing out of daily needs to make an adjustment to conditions as they were. A 178
century later we can describe, with the wisdom coming from perspective, what people of the time could hardly perceive to be happening.

The people of Haiti have had to endure so much criticism from foreign- 114
ers in past decades that it would be small wonder if they should dread the appearance of another book about their country. Herskovits, Parsons, Montague, Courlander, and other recent American authors, however, have abundantly proved that it is possible to treat the subject in scholarly fashion without wounding sensibilities. Every nation has unsavory items in its history and defects in its present state; this book has no intention of overdramatizing either the past or the present condition of Haiti.

All students who go from the United States to Haiti must sooner or later seek out Dr. Price-Mars, a true gentleman and scholar. He is not only one of the country's foremost intellectuals, but also a man of profound understanding and kindliness. I owe much to his illuminating suggestions, his practical assistance in my enterprise, and his patient answers to my questions. His works, whether historical, sociological, critical, or literary, are indispensable to an understanding of Haiti.

I am grateful likewise to Père Monteil, who during several weeks gave me the benefit of his years of experience among the people of his large parish, and who opened many avenues of research to me. The custodian of the excellent library of the Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne constantly aided my investigation. Père Demers allowed me on occasion to accompany him in his parish work. To all these men, and to the numerous other priests who showed me hospitality, I express my thanks.

It would be impossible to name all the persons who gave me help; yet I cannot forbear to mention former President Eugène Roy; Dr. Camille Lhérisson, a brilliant physician; Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, the historian; the directors of the agricultural school at Damien, and of the École Professionelle, École Centrale, and École Normale; M. Jean Fouchard, chef du Cabinet particulier du Président Vincent; M. Jacques Antoine, of the Haitian Legation in Washington; M. Édouard Estève, president of the Chambre du Commerce; Mme. Andrée Marini; M. Victor Montasse; and M. Émile Roy. All of these gave me valuable information, as did many other Haitians of high rank and low. I count it a particular privilege to number

increasingly arid as its altitude decreases. Next to the Plaine du Nord, 132
the best-watered part of Haiti is the southwestern peninsula, which projects far beyond the shelter of the mountains in the rest of the island.

When one subtracts from the 10,000 square miles all the sterile 433
wastes of cactus, the salt marshes and brackish lakes, and the rock barrens, one realizes the inevitability of a low standard of living for the mass of the people. Other nations buy little from Haiti, local in-
dustries never reach even the proportions familiar to small-town [439]
Americans, and the total national budget is less than seven million [651]
dollars a year. Not even the élite are well-to-do by American small- [565]
town standards; it is only by comparison with the masses that they can be said to constitute a favored economic class. They rule the country, however, and what benefits accrue to Haiti rarely get beyond their pockets.

The resident of Haiti can never lose sight of the social distinctions 565
between the two castes, for they permeate every phase of Haitian
life. It has been so since the first hours of the republic. Indeed, the 175
origins of the caste system lie in the French colonial days of the 178
eighteenth century.

field labor, the ruler emphasized the clemency of his new régime. 175
Labor the people must, but not under the whip; that arch symbol of 566
slavery was abolished forever. The working day was shortened by a 466
third. It was provided that, if just reason were shown, a man might even secure permission from his district commissioner to move from the plantation to which he was attached.

These were words. Facts were another matter. The overseers had been ordered to exact so much labor from their underlings, yet without whips; knowing no persuading power other than chastisement, they backed up their commands with blows of *lianes*, thick pliable vines which could be gathered anywhere in the island. Thus the laggard was driven, the law kept to the letter, and the overseer praised by his superiors. As for the working day, crops must be tended at the proper moment, so that the boasted shortening of hours generally came to little. Finally, the right to secure permission to move away from a plantation was effectively limited by the refusal of commissioners to grant any such request.

Every public expression of Dessalines showed a solicitude for the welfare of the workers, while his every act indicated that he regarded them as impersonal parts of the machine of state. He knew by his own former experience as a slave what a day's stint should be and the ruses used by laborers to avoid steady work; he was therefore able to order agricultural labor on a realistic basis.

The economic organization created by Dessalines provided the 175
roots for the peasantry which was soon to develop as a characteristic 178
form of Haitian life. Among these fundamental conditions were the 463
existence of agriculture as a prevalent occupation, the immobility of 24
all workers on the land, and a thorough schooling of the people in 433
patient acceptance. Dessalines might theoretically have established 566
some other economic system—a division of estates into small properties, for example, with each farmer a master of his own destiny; a democratic coöperative economy; slavery again; feudalism with a landed gentry. At critical times, one leader's choice may affect
the whole future life of the country. The decision of Dessalines to 175
keep the bulk of his people in servitude, without using the termi- 566
nology of slavery, gave the new freemen no opportunity to become acquainted with work other than tillage. They were sent back to the only tasks they had ever known, their horizons were just as limited as before, their personal freedom just as restricted. The worst punishments of slavery, together with torture and gross overwork,

175 643 661 such an example of rigor might spread. The moral element of the population had long looked askance at his libertinage; his first act upon entering a town during a visit of state was regularly to have his aides select for him the most attractive females in the vicinity, with whom he would spend more time than at the business of governing. [103] Not even his army was sorrowful over his death. He had let his loyal troops go for months without pay, and then, reviewing a group of them one day, taunted and railed at them for their ragged uniforms. "You look as naked as a bunch of old bottles!" he cried.

Dessalines had restored order to his country and had founded a state. Both achievements rested upon a display of force which inspired cringing fear and denied normal human aspirations. His entire social and economic order was based upon the subservience of the many to the few.

2. *Christophe (1807–1820)*

175 178 Until 1807 all Haitians had the same political background—the French colonial régime, revolution, the governorship of Toussaint, and the stern rule of Dessalines. Now the common path forked. Two avenues were opened up during the next dozen years, one by Christophe, the other by his Southern and mulatto rival, Pétion. The former was the road of discipline, hard work, and feudal control; the latter was one of persuasion, *laissez faire*, and small properties. Haiti ultimately chose the second.

175 643 642 662 The logical successor to Dessalines was his powerful Negro henchman, Christophe.[8] This black general felt so certain of his leadership that he did not even bother to attend the *Assemblée Constituante* which was to choose the new head of state. The mulattoes, however, had agreed among themselves that they had had enough of rule by ignorant ex-slaves. They consequently performed the very skillful manoeuvre of preparing a constitution which should effectively shear a new president of dictatorial power; this done, they dutifully elected Christophe to the presidential office. The wrathful general peremptorily declined to rule by virtue of so anaemic a document, and led his army southward to demand proper respect for his august

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[8] The name Christophe was taken from the English Caribbean island of St. Christopher, on which this black slave was born. Later in life he took as his first name Henry, spelling it in the English fashion rather than the French, as an indication of his wholehearted admiration of English people and English ways.

175 work until noon. A two-hour siesta followed, but from two until
566 sunset there was steady work. Only after evening prayers was the
512 worker free. During the day no cultivator might leave his task except
466 for direst need. The lame and the halt were not required to till the
fields, but must carry around buckets of drinking water, take care of
the children, and do odd jobs about the estate.

175 Christophe made a steady and, in the main, successful effort to
566 explain to the people the necessity of hard work on the plantation.
466 As with the noblemen, the serfs knew precisely what was expected of
them, and why. Their regimentation was strict, but understandable.
It was clearly stipulated that if a worker shirked his job he was to be
put in prison and made to do forced labor there. Laziness in the fields
was to be punished by strokes from the overseer's liane. Hard and
steady work was demanded during the whole thirteen years of
Christophe's rule, but only rarely was there complaint, as there had
been constantly under Dessalines, of cruelty on the part of overseers.

175 The quarter part of the total crop of any plantation was to go to
465 the workers as wages, and, since production increased and prices
rose, this quarter which they were free to spend as they pleased
provided a powerful incentive to further industry. As compared
with anything they had known before, the workers were now
recipients of an ample income. On the plantations they cultivated
[423] the money crops of sugar and coffee. In addition, each family had
[241] its own garden plot on which to raise the food crops—yams, plantains, beans, and bananas—for personal use.[9]

175 Christophe was so far ahead of his time that he tried to introduce
177 British methods of agriculture into his kingdom. The results were
407 insignificant. The plough, although obviously superior in efficiency
178 to the hoe, eliminated the sociable companionship of working in
unison, and demanded horses and mules which the country lacked.
The innovations were consequently too radical to be accepted. In the
main, the agricultural methods of the kingdom continued to be
those familiar in slave days.

175 Thirteen years of careful direction can fix many patterns of social
178 routine. One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

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[241] [9] The staples of other countries, such as Irish potatoes, wheat, barley, and oats, did not flourish in Haiti. On the large plantations, indigo and cotton, which had been money crops in the French régime, were generally neglected, as they had been in the time of Dessalines.

One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to
a plantation—and every ordinary country person was so attached 175
—might leave the estate without permission from a military officer.[10] 566
Two of the common folkways of Haitian peasant life since his time 178
have been immobility and general acceptance of orders from the [484]
military. Both characteristics had been fostered by slavery and by
the régimes of Toussaint and Dessalines, and these folkways became
fixed under Christophe.

Other rules introduced by the King, however, lapsed shortly after 175
his strong hand was removed. For example, the monarch required of 178
the whole population that whenever they visited the capital on feast 291
days or went to the market towns on Saturdays they be decently clad 527
in clean clothes.[11] Since the time of Christophe, neatness of appear- 183
ance has hardly been a folk characteristic, probably because of
poverty rather than lack of desire to dress well. Nor did scrupulous [461]
regularity of work in the fields continue as a folkway later, when the
great plantations were broken up.

Like a father the King tried to inculcate moral standards of honesty 175
in his people. To prevent theft he had small valuables, such as watches 577
or jewelry or purses, "planted," and if the finder did not immediately
turn them over to the nearest Dahomet, punishment was meted out. 177
Such a policy made honesty contagious. Thefts and depredation were soon almost unknown. The most tempting store of wealth could be left safely unlocked or in the open air. Christophe's achievement in this matter is eloquent testimony to his success as a paternal leader, for it is no small task to initiate moral ideas among people who for a generation have lacked them. Even today it is the proud boast of the Haitians that their people are honest.

As compared with the liberties of farmers in the United States of 175
the same period, the Haitian agricultural workers' freedom was 566
infinitesimally small, but by contrast with the bondage of slavery,
their new status was definitely higher.

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[10] Christophe called his royal police force "Dahomets," after the West African [625]
kingdom, Dahomey, from which most of the men had come. They were not ordinary soldiers but especially imported and carefully selected men whose intelligence made them stand out from their fellows. Each Dahomet was given a course of training in his task as administrator before being sent out. The general consensus of foreign visitors was that these Dahomets were efficient even in small matters.

[11] This rule was partly an indication of Christophe's vanity, personal and national, [577]
for he was deeply desirous of the good opinion of white visitors, especially those from [186]
England. He wanted Europeans to respect Haiti as they would respect any small state, and not to praise it merely as an example of "Negro progress."

to be comforted. They had lost their best friend and their "*petit père*." 175

Dessalines would be emperor and Christophe king, but Pétion 643
was content to remain a simple president. He was an anomaly—as if 159
a Parisian of delicate sensibilities and mellow tolerance had somehow come to power with a darker skin in an alien land.

He has been highly praised and is worthy of eulogy. The fact remains that his country was rich when he came to power and poor when he died; united in 1806 and divided in 1818. Candor compels his admirers to admit that many of the calamities of the social and economic history of Haiti can be traced back to Pétion's administration.

The crucial act of Pétion was to parcel the land. From that policy 175
flowed the enduring consequences which became the predominant 423
socio-economic characteristics of Haiti. 421

Until Pétion's time the island had never known small properties. 178
Large estates had been the mark of social distinction in the French colony; Toussaint had kept the plantations large,[18] while Dessalines and Christophe had absorbed more and more land for the state, leasing it out in great blocks. The constitution of 1806[19] gave no indication of impending change, for it specifically declared all land to be the property of the Haitian nation. Within three years, however, the process of dividing and giving away the state's lands was well under way.

It would be illuminating to know what mental process in Pétion moved him to make so radical an about-face in land policy. The reasons he gave were, first, that the people had ably defended their country and so deserved a reward; second, that he wanted all the people to have a vital interest in the actual soil itself.[20] These may have been his only reasons. Others suggest themselves: the republic owed wages to its large standing army, which were more easily paid in land, of which the state had much, than in cash, of which it had little and progressively less; it would be much easier to keep peace in a country where men were free than where they were serfs; and the example of free ownership in the South would seem alluring enough

[18] He permitted the leasing of plantations as small as fifty acres if the soil were especially rich. [427]

[19] December 27. This document was largely the handiwork of Pétion.

[20] The former explanation he consistently gave in his various messages to the Senate proposing progressive parcelings of the land; the latter he wrote to a friend, saying that he wished to "*enraciner chez tous l'amour du sol.*"

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175 to Christophe's serfs in the North to cause defections ultimately
423 sufficient to win the civil war for the republic.[21]

Those who would read into Pétion's democratization of land
175 tenure the liberal convictions of a far-sighted statesman must ignore
643 the evidence of his earliest land acts. For two or three years nothing
423 was so apparent as that Pétion wished to please his friends, the
mulatto aristocrats. He not only had the Senate restore to their
663 former owners all lands of which Dessalines had despoiled them, but he also agreed to a law authorizing a cash payment up to the full value of crops planted and then lost during the last year of the Emperor's rule.[22] By these concessions the President immediately wiped out the rancor left behind him by Dessalines, reversed that ruler's whole land policy, gained the support of thousands of aspirants for social position, and bound in personal loyalty to his régime all the colored leaders.

175 He went further. Insecurity of tenure under Dessalines had worried
423 landlords who were not actually mulcted of their estates, and so the
President undertook to guarantee security. Thereafter all sales of
[428] land were to be registered by government deed, and so confirmed to the purchaser in perpetuity; government courts would be empowered to settle disputes over payment of rents; proof of the death of the testator must be forthcoming before wills could be probated. Not even the single limitation on ownership—that if the proprietor of an estate should remain away from Haiti the state might lease his property and receive the income from it—disturbed them, for they were patriots enough, and poor enough, to feel that Haitians should live at home.

110 As if this were not enough to please the landed gentry, the tax

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114 [21] Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti* (Paris, 1854–57), V, 163–166, suggests another reason, namely, that people will always be more ready to defend land they actually own than for an impersonal state. This sounds logical, but certainly the Negroes had fought ardently enough to drive out the French in 1803, landless though they were. Saint-Rémy continues: "And moreover, was it not time to dismember the enormous plantations which still bore the names of those colonists whose mother country might still at any moment descend to reclaim their heritage? And could this dismemberment be achieved otherwise than by giving the people an honorable title to it?"

423 [22] Two successive laws, February 9 and March 16, 1807, achieved these ends. The former specified that all persons who, by purchase or gift or legacy, had acquired land before November 1, 1803 (when Rochambeau surrendered) or since February 7, 1804 (when Dessalines had ordered a confirmation of all titles) should be newly assured of their rights to such holdings. There was a single, possibly unimportant, limitation: the acquisition must have been *by* Haitians *from* Haitians.

175 642 ● 178 433 Haitian writers sometimes praise Pétion for his democratic leanings, by implication criticizing Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe for their feudalistic notions. If the blacks were undemocratic, at least they had experience back of the system they selected for administering the land: their methods worked. Pétion's plan, on the contrary, admirable though it seemed to later "liberals," was unexpectedly disappointing. The national income declined; estates were steadily broken up and sub-leased to small farmers; sugar disappeared from the state's balance sheet, while coffee did not supply an equivalent income; discipline of the workers gave way to individualism. Although the whole legislative code favored the landlords, la grande culture crumbled. One is driven to conclude that Pétion simply tried one device after another—always the easiest he could find—to keep state economy functioning.

175 178 565 When Pétion came to power, the common folk of southern Haiti were serfs with a memory of slavery; when he died, they were peasants. At the beginning of his régime the mulattoes and other social aspirants felt they were struggling for very existence against the relentless policies of black rulers; as it closed they were beyond any doubt aristocrats, but by the same token progressively less well-to-do. No one any longer attacked their social pretensions; but the worldly wealth on which these pretensions were based was disappearing along with the country's prosperity, so that new criteria had to be developed.

175 671 As we have said, the keynote of Pétion's rule was persuasion. Where Dessalines ordered, Pétion suggested; where Christophe decreed, Pétion recommended. There is not a single act one could cite during his entire presidency which had the effect of tightening up the organization of the republic. When laws were not properly observed, instead of penalties being made more severe or sure of application, the laws themselves were calmly allowed to lapse. In fact, the period from 1807 to 1818 was one of transition, of experiment, of discovering a congenial way of life. Since it was clear that the mass of citizens were peacefully disposed and unambitious, the President was inclined to let custom rule in each little community. Laws were not repealed, but they were enforced only when general public opinion was clearly in their favor. At many points the upper class would have liked more disciplinary control over the masses and said so to Pétion; yet they realized that in a less than ideal world one

175 against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In
671 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly
625 limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One
536 of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural
517 police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of
175 office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of
● 178 nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti.
24 The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse
433 into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

175 The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very
114 little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people,
435 principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work,
461 carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could
464 induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their
184 "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

> 114 Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and
> 175 those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which
> 433 they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently
> 423 a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable
> 425 to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he can neither find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them.

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[534] [45] Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connection with the Vodun religion.

[241] [46] Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti* (London, 1830), I, 100. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

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recognized that the really important characteristics peculiar to the 463
peasant are his sentiments and attitudes, the intense attachment to his 241
native soil and family tradition, which, even in the economic sphere,
take precedence over the desire for individual advancement and
gain."[51]

Haiti in 1804 was still a country of large estates, and Dessalines and 175
Christophe strove to keep it so. Under the active generosity of 24
Pétion and the passive indifference of Boyer after his Code Rural had 423
failed, few great plantations were left intact. The recorded donations 671
of these two presidents to their generals, civil functionaries, and 425
lesser officers, are as follows:[52]

134 grants of	150 carreaux	(about 450 acres).	Total: 59,300 acres.
176	35	105	18,480
639	30	90	57,510
711	25	75	54,325
2,322	20	60	139,320
8,000	5	15	120,000
			Grand total: 448,935 acres.

Haiti followed French law rather than British, so that the rule of 175
primogeniture did not prevail. It requires only a moment's reflection 428
to see that even within a single generation the thousands of small 178
properties noted in the table would be subdivided many times, since 423
a father apportioned his land to all his sons. By 1842 it is probable
that not a single plantation of the size common in colonial times was
still intact.[53] On the testimony of numerous government officials and (311)
commandants of arrondissements, it was estimated in that year that
46,610 small landed properties were under fair cultivation.[54] If the [162]
population at that time be estimated at 800,000, seven eighths of
whom were engaged in agriculture, there would accordingly be
about fifteen people (including children) to each rural property. But

A large number of small estates are left out of this account, which are said 175
to be *badly* cultivated, or neglected. Taking the number of each separate 241

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[51] C. von Dietze, "Peasantry," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, XII, 50.

[52] This table is compiled from figures cited in Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1888), *passim*, and Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre* (Port-au-Prince, 1923), p. 18.

[53] See Raymond Renaud, *Le Régime foncier en Haïti* (Paris, 1934), pp. 42–43.

[54] Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

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175 by persuasion, to do as much work as possible for his and their own
473 interests. In a few cases the success of such efforts was tolerably good;
427 but one worker disposed to be sullen or idle, or even not physically
strong, might throw the whole scheme into disorder. One's own
24 profits would be cut by the misdeeds of others even when one had
425 himself been industrious. This caused a decline of incentive, some-
461 times among a whole group of potentially good workers, because
one or two of the number shirked. Probably the most patent evil of
such arrangements was that every laborer realized that he did not
suffer as directly for idleness or neglect as when working for himself;
his fellow workers shared the consequences of his misconduct in
some degree, and his employer in a still greater measure. The driving
force of individual responsibility was removed.

[692] Boyer and Inginac, foreseeing just such disorder, had tried to
[684] provide against it in the Code Rural by giving summary powers to
local judges to inflict penalties upon lazy or malingering workers.
Quite aside, however, from the loss of time and the inconvenience to
both parties in going constantly to a judge for his decision, the
proprietor was afraid to act on this principle to any extent, since if
he did so he might lose his laborers altogether.

175 It was a rare proprietor, then, who could hope to make much of a
473 fortune out of his plantation. More and more the landowners, having
427 subdivided their fields, grew lax in overseeing them. The workers,
freed from constant supervision, accustomed by long habit to living
24 in one hut, and unconsciously developing a mentality which made
466 them feel, as did American squatters on frontier lands, that they had
425 a right to the land they tilled, imperceptibly developed into peasants.
● 178 The state's remaining properties, no longer under cultivation, were
invaded by families of small farmers, and the government took no
steps to oust them or send them back to privately owned plantations.
The estates of individual aristocrats underwent the same fate if not
[625] carefully watched. Theoretically, it was the duty of the army to drive
out squatters, to force laborers back into "proper" agricultural work;
but the army consisted of peasant youths who would not turn
against people of their own group.

671 Legal irregularity was gradually sanctioned by the passage of
178 time, usage being a stronger guarantor of rights than unenforced
laws on the statute books.

810 Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the unplanned, undesired

unplanned, undesired

Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the 175
result of two policies intended to achieve ends quite different; first, 421
presidential gifts of land, the chief purpose of which had been to pay 24
the soldiers of the republic; and second, the crop-sharing system 463
adopted by landlords after the failure of Boyer's Code. 178

6. *The Drawing of Caste Lines* (1820–1843)

Almost every major presidential aim of Boyer came to grief. His 175
tranquil quarter-century rule, the unified island, the financial surplus 178
with which his presidency began, the peace with France after 1825— 565
all these advantages combined with his good intentions did not save his projects from shipwreck. Near the beginning of his régime he announced that, like his revered predecessor Pétion, he felt the safety of Haiti to lie in the abolition of all color distinctions and prejudices. Just as his great Code Rural proved a complete failure, however, so did his efforts to do away with the color line. On the contrary, it was during Boyer's time that class distinctions became fixed, in large part although not wholly, on the basis of color.

Stating that the policy of his government was to put an end, as far 175
as possible, to jealousies of caste, he consistently for a few years 647
promoted a black every time a promotion had been given to a 563
mulatto or other light-skinned person. This procedure soon met an 212
insuperable obstacle. Government posts in general required literacy, 555
and only a very small number of blacks were educated, so that the supply of Negroes was not sufficient to furnish him with candidates. Since one of the few roads to lucrative success lay in official positions, ambitious young colored men sought eagerly for government office, and Boyer soon had no alternative but to advance men of his own
complexion. In the army, on the other hand, literacy was not 175
necessary for promotion. Ambitious Negro youths, therefore, fre- 701
quently chose this career which, while not very profitable in mone- 555
tary rewards, at least gave a man a certain social status and economic 563
security.

Because of the state of education in the republic, consequently, an 175
ugly situation developed, with the civil arm of government almost 647
wholly in control of the colored element and the military force 701
dominated by blacks. Fortunately for the country no crisis developed
during the 1820's and 1830's which made an open breach between [563]
army and state.

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Next to the agricultural system, the state of education in the republic 175
probably had as much to do as anything with fixing the caste
system upon Haiti. So long as the mass of people were not only 871
black but illiterate as well, they would have no means of reaching a 563
social status beyond the one in which they existed. Certainly the aspiring 564
Negroes would not wish to enlighten them, for to stir up the 178
whole people would destroy the very possibility of distinction. As W. S. Gilbert puts it, "When everyone is somebody, then no one's anybody." Public education, consequently, hardly advanced a step during Boyer's twenty-five years. It had had a feeble enough beginning under Pétion and remained, as it had been, a prerogative of the well-to-do.[38]

Under the complaisant rule of Boyer, accordingly, the people of color came to regard themselves as the unquestioned élite. Their claim was shared, though not always acknowledged, by a small number of blacks (mostly from the North) who had been anciens libres in colonial Saint-Domingue or noblemen under Christophe; who were literate, or whose wealth and ambition attracted attention. Boyer's boast that "all the feelings and prejudices, either of olden times or of national origin, have been superseded by an intense patriotism" was pure buncombe, as he certainly knew.

If only the best brains of the colored group had been content to 175
serve the government, Haiti might have profited from her situation; 555
but lesser government offices were merely springboards for foreign 662
trade in coffee and mahogany, or for the manipulation of business 661
deals. Not "intense patriotism," as Boyer liked to think, but financial 178
gain was the motivating force of the élite, as it had been from
colonial times. The man who could amass a modest fortune, so that [647]
his children might be educated and their security assured, had done his duty, and he would have been regarded as quixotic to renounce business opportunities for the dubious honor of minor political office. As a consequence of this natural search for gain, the government during Boyer's administration became less and less efficient. Relatives of élite businessmen were given posts because the President could not afford to offend important families. These minor officials then performed their duties awkwardly, or neglected them, in "the unfailing obliquity of dullness."

Skin color became the obsession of high society. Those who had 175 563
no other merit of which to boast could still revel in their complex- 564

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[38] See chap. XVI.

175 ions. Intermarriages between persons of widely different color
563 became extremely rare, being regarded by many lighter Haitians
564 with actual disgust. Everyone with social pretensions wanted to be
whiter. Dr. Brown stated it baldly: "The pure negro seeks to ally
● [178] himself to the griffe,[59] the griffe to the mulatto, the mulatto to the
quateroon, the latter to a mustif, and the mustif, having but an
untraceable tinge of African blood in his organization, is uproariously indignant if he is accused of having any at all."[60] An educated young black of several generations of free parents was scornfully turned down by a lighter-skinned woman considerably his inferior in breeding and wealth because her children would be darker than herself—"*petits enfants griffes,*" as she put it. The prejudices of colored people against blacks was almost as great, if not quite as intense, as the former prejudice of whites against colored people in colonial times. No one forgot that there had been black as well as colored freedmen in the colony; but it was much simpler for people of color to claim their long career as élite than for blacks to do so.

The attitude of upper-class Haitians toward whites in the midst of all this color prejudice was an interesting mixture. On the one hand, all good Haitians professed to dread a return of the whites; on the other, they welcomed white businessmen in the country. In a certain respect the whites were regarded much as were the Jews of Europe
[673] in the Middle Ages: they were wealthy—and therefore legitimate
objects of pillage, necessary evils for the sake of finance. Theft from a
[671] white man by government action was a service to the state. Laws
[641] were consequently varied from time to time with the sole purpose of
profiting from a foreigner's position. True, the trader might protest
[423] to his home government, but if England or the United States took a
strong stand, Haiti could always retreat; if those governments did not stand firm, Haiti had gained. In the Haitian courts the whites had little show, for Article 38 of the Constitution forbade them to own real estate or to become citizens; they might not even hold a lease for more than ten years; and they might not marry Haitian women.

Nevertheless, the analogy with mediaeval Jews falls down at one vital point: whites were not viewed with contempt. Quite the con-

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[192] [59] A term denoting three parts in four of Negro blood. This term as well as "mustif" goes back to colonial white society; neither was, or is, used by cultivated Haitians.

[60] Brown, *op. cit.*, II, 283-284.

175 an ineffective government, momentarily in the hands of colored
563 élite. Attempting to dominate politics was a numerically small group
565 of colored people and a still smaller group of Negroes. Although
[701] prevailingly black, the army might be, and in the later nineteenth
century was continually, used by whichever group offered more.
[669] A third power, a middle class, might have balanced these antagonistic
factions. Lacking such a moderating influence, Haiti was the victim
of recurrent revolutionary movements.

175 At the time of Boyer, actual democracy would have been no safeguard,
for it would have meant the supremacy of ignorance. His
● 178 rule was the beginning of unfortunate days for Haiti. After the
642 auspicious opening years, the President became an impotent onlooker
643 as his country declined. It is instructive to compare the Haiti
of Dessalines and Christophe with the Haiti of 1843, only one generation
later.[60]

175 The Haiti of 1806 had been a beehive of activity. Soldiers, foremen,
178 and policemen then stood over the workers with lianes to
force them to labor for the benefit of their state. Production was
642 carefully planned, an ordered hierarchy making every person in the
433 country responsible to another higher than himself until the ruler
466 was reached at the pinnacle. The cardinal fault of any laborer was to
shirk at his task. The year 1843, on the contrary, found Haiti in a
condition of quiescence which, to those who remembered the old
days, resembled torpor. The central government had ceased to drive
its citizens, and its half-hearted attempts at persuasion were futile.
Overseers, drivers of gangs of workers, soldiers whose duty it was to
enforce labor, had disappeared from the scene. Every man was his
own master.

175 The standard of living in 1806 as in 1843 was low; but in the earlier
year there had been a promise of great things to come once Haiti
178 had rebuilt what war had destroyed. The succeeding years, however,
511 failed to inculcate into the people a desire for any higher standard of
life. Country dwellers were benighted; ignorance deepened the habit

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[60] Haiti has never had an accurate census, so that it is impossible even to estimate
[162] the total population of the country either in 1806 or in 1843. The figures of 380,000
[175] and 800,000 given by some authors for the two years are mere guesses. Likewise, one
can only deduce the proportion of people in the main economic and social categories;
probably seventy-five per cent of the Haitians were serfs in 1806 and the same percentage
peasants in 1843; the "aristocracy," including all who did not derive a living
by manual labor or army service, could hardly have reached five per cent in either
year; the army, house servants, day laborers in the towns, and petty businessmen
would make up the other twenty per cent.

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of living only for the day by making people content with a low 175
level of physical existence. Haitian peasants were isolated from the 178
rest of the world; and one who has no standard of comparison rarely 511
has the incentive to improve his living conditions.

Production declined between 1806 and 1843 both in quantity and 175
in quality. Sugar, the staple of colonial trade and still an important 178
export under Christophe, disappeared from the market figures alto- 433
gether under Boyer. Most of the cane which was raised was worked 257
into syrup and then into tafia (raw rum) for local consumption. 249
Careful attention and the well-ordered machinery necessary for 245
sugar manufacture were both lacking in 1843. Sugar cane was almost
never newly planted, but simply lasted on from French days; what 439
plants there were had little attention: they were not manured, or ploughed, or stripped of their dead leaves. Everything was left to nature. The production of coffee in actual number of pounds stood up well, although the quality fell off through lack of cultivation; the price in world markets steadily declined, however, so that the crop of 1843 brought in only twelve million francs as compared with twenty million for the smaller crop of 1822.[63]

Practically every acre of the fertile soil of Haiti was cultivated in 175
1806, the methods steadily improving under Christophe. Irrigation 178
projects were then being developed to replace those destroyed in the 24
wars, and a measure of experimentation went on with new crops 433
and fertilizers. In 1843, however, what was called a coffee "plantation" was actually only a large tract of land on which coffee trees grew wild. There was no laying out of the lands nor any improvement of the soil or pruning of the trees to strengthen the parent stem. Until the berries were ready to be picked the coffee tree was rarely touched, except when pigs scratched their backs on it, or goats and donkeys cropped the grass around it. Cotton likewise received little cultivation. Cocoa raising practically ceased altogether, for it required intelligent management.

Haiti under Dessalines still had many buildings of French con-

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[63] The state figures for 1843 revealed only four money crops, no one of which was so productive of income as sugar had been. In the comparative tables given below it must be remembered that prices declined between 1822 and 1843. [433]

	5-Year Average, 1822–26	*1843*
Coffee	34,000,000 pounds	35,000,000 pounds
Cotton	678,000 "	2,000,000 "
Campêche	5,600 "	30,000,000 "
Acajou	2,460,000 feet	6,000,000 feet

Haiti under Dessalines still had many building

175 ●178 331 of French construction, both plantation mansions and slave quarters. With forced labor available these had been kept in a measure of repair. Christophe, not content with leftovers from colonial days, had sponsored architectural activity all over his kingdom; if his citadel is the most noteworthy example, there are also to his credit lesser palaces and government warehouses. Almost no building was done by Pétion and Boyer, however, and by the 1840's the constructions of the French [731] had fallen into serious disrepair. Severe earthquakes and fires quickly ruined what time had already weakened. By the middle of the century one saw, instead of trim slave quarters near great mansions, a few straggling towns of one-story houses, the hillsides dotted with ramshackle huts, and the plains with daubed shacks.

175 178 181 433 From great estates to tiny plots; from carefully tilled fields to small gardens in a wilderness; from financial prosperity to debt; from directed enterprise to sloth; from an attitude of hopeful determination to one of tolerance for things as they are—these are the striking contrasts of the two periods. It could hardly have been imagined in Christophe's day that the smart, disciplined Dahomet would be succeeded by casual ragamuffins who dozed on their tilted chairs while on sentry duty. Christophe had liked his subjects to be well dressed, and insisted on it; but the British consul in Boyer's time wrote that "the laborers are, generally speaking, nearly naked; in fact, adults only wearing what is barely necessary to prevent indecent exposure, while the children of both sexes run about without covering of any kind."[64]

175 178 433 It was the parceling of landed estates combined with the disappearance of forced labor which initiated the transition from serfdom to peasantry. Personalities as dynamic as Christophe's or as brutal as [466] Dessalines' would have been required to keep the people in a servile [433] condition in a land of tropical fertility. Contemporary foreign judgment was almost unanimous in placing the blame for declining [461] prosperity upon indolence (the word is continually repeated, [164] generally preceded by the adjective "natural"). It may be noted in passing that no one at the time seems to have realized how widespread were the debilitating diseases of hookworm and malaria, which can make apparently husky men prefer rest to work. Responsibility for economic failure rests as much upon the governing class,

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[64] Charles Mackenzie, *Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti* (1829), p. 86.

however, as on the masses. Nothing was done to educate the people 175
and so inculcate in them the desire for a higher standard of living. 178
Where food is easily got, the government gentle, and the people 433
ignorant, one hardly looks for progress. [511]

Foreigners who knew Haiti were prophesying doom through
most of Boyer's administration. The British consul was the most 114
vocal of these prophets. He toured the whole republic in 1828 and 175
found only local variations on a sorry state of affairs. At Jacmel he 178
reported a parceling of the land, a decline of plantations, and a 433
horror of corporal punishment by the people; it seemed to surprise 466
him that every blow given a worker was returned in kind. In the
arrondissements of Saint-Marc and Gonaïves cotton continued to be 24
the chief crop as it had been in French days but quantity and quality
had declined. At Petite-Rivière relative prosperity prevailed because
the lands there were under the control of a former lieutenant of
Christophe, who managed to apply that king's stern discipline to
his workers. From Gonaïves to Cap Nicolas Môle cultivation
was at a low ebb; near Cap-Haïtien everything agricultural was in
ruins.[65]

Industry and discipline, the two commonest characteristics of the 175
Haiti of Christophe, were precisely those most notably absent from 178
the Negro masses of 1843. Obedience had given way to independence 181
of behavior. A visitor in 1842 describes the actual condition of a 466
plantation in the arrondissement of Furcy. Where formerly thirty- 464
two families had toiled industriously, under strict overseers who
were free to inflict physical punishment upon laggards, now only 427
twelve families remained, the rest having become "freeholders."
These twelve had a crop-sharing agreement with the owner of the
estate whereby they received the income from half the 10,000 pounds
of coffee yielded by the land; but also they

> appropriate to themselves almost the whole of the provisions which the land furnishes, sending down only a few of the rarer vegetables, beans, peas, and artichokes, to their master, for his table at Port-au-Prince, and supplying his need when he comes to reside for a few days in the country. This he knows very well, but has no alternative but to bear it quietly.[66]

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[65] See particularly *ibid.*, pp. 94, 103-105. The consul clearly felt that the only hope of salvation in Haiti was a reintroduction of some sort of coercion such as that used by Dessalines and Christophe.

[66] Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

IV

CASTE LINES BECOME PERMANENT

175 THE contrast between the golden days of forced labor and the
•178 stagnating mediocrity of Boyer's Haiti was as vivid to thinking Haitian aristocrats as it was to foreign whites. Particularly the young "intellectuals" of the 'thirties who knew something of the progress taking place in the rest of the Western World felt that the time had come to stem the wave of economic disintegration at home. In a series of pronouncements they pointed out that the advancement of Haiti had "been constantly slowed up for some time. . . . Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots." One may discount the phrase
175 about "sincere patriots," for peasants were patriots even though
668 undisturbed by the economic stagnation. The agitation for reform won a wide following among all the élite who cherished a glowing recollection of earlier days.

Leaders of the young men called upon Boyer in 1838 to introduce stronger methods of forced labor; but Boyer, remembering the fate of his Code Rural in which he had tried to do precisely this, could think of no effective way of tinkering again with the economic system. From the young men he received the most contradictory advice as to specific methods. The result of the appeal was therefore merely continued inaction by the government. The agitators, ex-
175 cellent critics if poor reformers, accordingly persisted in their cam-
668 paign, adding new converts to their cause until the movement pro-
669 duced a crisis. Revolution broke out in January 1843 at Torbeck in the South, and rapidly spread toward the capital; within two months
643 Boyer and his faithful secretary-general, Inginac, had departed for exile.[1]

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[643] [1] Boyer went first to Jamaica, and then to Paris. In the latter capital King Louis-
[159] Philippe gave him an audience and called him "prince." Boyer replied, "Sire, I am no prince. I have merely been the head of a small republic." The King of France thereupon affectionately pressed Boyer's hand, remarking, "When one has governed a million people for twenty-five years, he is raised to the rank of princes." . . . Boyer died in Paris in 1850.

"empire" tottered to economic ruin. Graft, default on the debt, 175
increasing deficits, and debased currency were the order of the day, 643
and so continued until 1859, when the accumulation of anger over 652
the useless wars and the humiliating defeats made the Emperor so
unpopular that a new and more carefully planned revolution ac- 669
complished his downfall.

Fifteen years of administration by Negro rulers had broken the 175
political power of the colored élite. Only three light-skinned men 643
became president thereafter until the occupation of Haiti by the 178
American Marines in 1915; in the seventy-two years following
Boyer's downfall, mulattoes ruled during only eight. The army 564
under a black general was too powerful, a colored president too
hampered by suspicion, to make the political game worth the candle.
The colored élite, therefore, adapted themselves to existing conditions as best they could, controlling the business life of Haiti, filling the law offices and, because of their literacy, the secretaryships of state, and indulging in honorific cultural pursuits.

In the years after Soulouque the basic realities of Haitian life were 175
changed hardly at all by shifting political administrations. Some of the 643
presidents were mildly progressive, many were indifferent; still more 66
were actually harmful; but the lives of the mass of peasants were not
often touched by presidential vagaries. Politics was an affair almost wholly of townspeople, of the army, the élite, and the pseudo-élite. Revolutions, counterrevolutions, movements of reform, international tangles, financial woes, and most of the other complications to which unstable states are heir, absorbed the attention of rulers and upper-class folk who were politically inclined.

Constitutions were made by presidents and changed by their suc- 175
cessors; the Senate passed contradictory laws in the same session if 642
the chief executive so recommended; the courts were presided over 671
by the president's men. Haitian law in the latter half of the nineteenth
century was what the president's immediate strength and wish made 692
it—or else it was folk custom, undisturbed by the rulers.

Never once, in the three quarters of a century after Boyer's time, 175
did Haiti approach the high standard of production known in 178
colonial days or in the early years of independence. The pattern of
Haitian social and economic life became fixed in this seventy-five 433
years. Haiti became a country of small-scale tillage by a peasant 565
population, with only enough external trade to provide moderate 489

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● 178 fortunes, that is, a few thousands of dollars, for a small number of
élite, and to make the presidency a position economically rewarding
565 enough to justify revolutionary conspiracies. The growth of a
433 peasantry set in train during the long régime of Boyer continued,
439 unbroken even by the numerous insurrections, until fixed in the
mores. Land owned by the countryfolk was divided and redivided
[423] among their heirs, so that even holdings of moderate size became
[428] smaller.

Not one of the twenty-two rulers following Boyer made the
175 slightest effort to return the country to the forced labor system of
643 Dessalines and Christophe. They seemed to recognize the inevitability
566 of a peasant way of life, or at least the impossibility of luring
423 the people back to directed labor after a long experience of freedom.
On the contrary, several presidents still further parceled the land.

President Guerrier, for example, the very year after Boyer was
175 deposed, put on sale at moderate prices those state lands in the North
643 not reserved for public use.[5] If the revolutionaries of 1843 had hoped
423 to bring back Christophe's system of forced labor, their hopes were
doomed to disappointment because of the state's need of immediate
income. Christophe's state land areas were now broken up in the one
part of the country where a few large plantations still existed.

President Geffrard in 1862 gave his blessing to small ownership, the
175 basis of peasantry. Whereas Pétion's laws had prohibited sales of land
643 in parcels less than fifteen acres, Geffrard's law regularized the leasing
421 and sale of national property in lots of fifteen acres *at most*. Geffrard
423 was the first president openly to admit that many government lands
had been lost to citizens by squatting. In an endeavor to give legality
to land held by squatters' rights, his law demanded that squatters
register their claims, announcing that within a short time there
would be no further dismemberment of the national patrimony
except by grants and sales.[6] Few registrations were made, however,
for the Haitian peasant had already acquired a suspicion of legal
documents he could not read or understand, and he could see no
reason for legalizing a status in which, with the squatter's tenacity
and inertia, he already felt himself secure.

800 Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

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[5] By a law of September 23, 1844.

[6] Law of August 14, 1862. The articles cited here are 2 and 4.

to attempt to retrace the path of property evolution, which has 175
steadily taken its own course since the time of Pétion."[11] 423

With the peasants prevailingly satisfied in their daily round of life, 565
the separation of upper and lower castes in Haitian society has
gradually become an accepted fact. At least ninety per cent of the [162]
total population now belong to the peasant group, whose members are as much reconciled to their status as in the United States the poorest colored folk to theirs. Vaguely they may often wish they had the privileges and luxuries of those above them; often, likewise, they feel resentment at the way in which they are treated; but in so far as it is permissible to generalize about two million people, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant rarely complains of his lot.

Of the remaining ten per cent of the population a small fraction [178]
look upon themselves as élite. Some families of this group can be traced back to colonial times when their ancestors were already affranchis; others began to take on aristocracy under Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer. Those whose forebears have become élite only since 1843 are less firmly entrenched in the topmost class. However, since no president since Boyer has ever succeeded in weakening caste lines, the élite one or two per cent may be said to constitute a stable social group.

It is significant that although the blacks had the government in their hands for three quarters of a century they were unable to effect any slight change either in caste membership or in caste lines.

The part of the population which is neither élite nor peasant is not 565
"middle class," as that term is understood in the Western World. It 368
is rather a shifting percentage of Haitians whose one prevailing characteristic is their residence in towns. Some are wage earners, some small tradesmen; some are ex-élite on the way down the

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[11] The intimate observer of the Haitian peasant never fails to comment upon his [181]
love of the land. Whereas the colonial planter attached a value to his estate because it [421]
produced wealth, the peasant loves his little plot because it is his home. Through all the
sixteen successive constitutions of Haiti, the one unchangeable article has been the [425]
prohibition of sale to foreigners of real estate in the country. Haitian land is for Haitian [423]
people—or was so until after the American Occupation. Likewise, the peasant is suspicious of any law which seems likely to reintroduce the system of large properties, for these might condemn him to leave his land and work at wages for the benefit of a master who, whether kindly or pitiless, would still deprive him of his present liberty.
Therefore the Haitian countryman defends with all his force this soil to which his [24]
liberty attaches him, and which he cultivates after his own manner. "The Haitian loves his land almost as a man loves his woman."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 178 565 829 However, as regards caste itself we can now see that after a hundred years practically nothing has changed, even through the Occupation. In the essential structure of the Haitian social system there is still a twofold division. In the mind of élite persons the peasant exists only as a very necessary but essentially stupid part of the country's economic life. The casual visitor who, after two weeks in Port-au-Prince and its environs, has met a few distinguished Haitians, has already sensed the barriers of caste which exist between élite and the lower orders. If the sojourner remains longer and is accepted into the drawing rooms of the élite, he will hear exciting and brilliant discussions of such questions as whether Haitian civilization has in it anything of the African,[6] whether it might not be wise for Haiti to throw over both French and Créole and adopt a new language, and whether the people of the North are not superior to those of the South;[7] however, no self-satisfied member of the élite, in an expan-

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[114] [829] [6] See, for example, the article by Lorimer Denis and Dr. François Duvalier, "La Civilisation haïtienne: notre mentalité est-elle africaine ou gallo-latine?" in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, VII, No. 23 (May, 1936), pp. 1–31. Anthony Froude, in his *English in the West Indies* (New York, 1888), tells of an American consul asking a Haitian why the island was not cultivated more intensely. "The dusky soldier laid his hand upon his breast and waved his hand. 'Ah!' he said, 'that might do for English or Germans or Franks; we of the Latin race have higher things to occupy us!'"

[114] [829] [7] This last sentiment was noted by Sir Spenser St. John (*Hayti, or the Black Republic* [London, 1889], p. 14), who calls it a popular idea at the time he wrote and for years before, the élite of the North explaining it by the tradition of industry instilled during Christophe's reign. But Moreau de Saint-Méry had already pointed out that in colonial times there was greater fertility, more abundant rain, more intelligence in management of plantations, more slaves, more distinction and polish among the masters, in the North than in the South. Auguste Magloire (in *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social*, p. 263) thinks the North infinitely superior to the South; it did not participate in the violence of political change in the early days, yet when it did intervene it took the lead. He stated however that the North seemed to be losing its social superiority, and certainly its economic superiority, because of its cultural subordination to France: this made French ideas prevail, and one of the chief French ideas is that political power is supremely important; the North consequently came to seek political superiority when it should have preserved cultural and social preëminence. Pauléus Sannon, on the other hand (*Essai historique sur la Révolution de 1843* [Aux Cayes, 1905], pp. 5–9), regards the South as considerably more advanced intellectually. It has never, he says, been able to submit to the absolutist yoke of government, not because of the French influence, for the South was least developed under the colonial régime, but because of its geographical situation, with its long broken coast line, its ports, cities, tribunals, customs-houses, schools, and the like. Those who have outside connections are always more open minded and progressive, he says, than inhabitants of the interior. There is no important town in the South which is not on the sea. Nowhere were the affranchis more numerous or richer than in the South, and these men led the revolution. (See Beaubrun Ardouin, *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti* [Port-au-Prince, 1853–60], I, 97.) All these influences made for a democratic spirit, but also for one of agitation.

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sive mood, will speak of the peasant and his contributions to Haiti; he thinks only in terms of his own caste.[8] Upper-class Haitians dread the sight of tourists taking pictures of native scenes, fearing that the travelers will return to their own country and label these pictures, "Typical Haitian Scenes," when, as anyone should know, typical Haiti is upper-class Haiti.[9] 175 178 565 829

The American Occupation failed of many of its ends because it did not recognize the social situation and its implications; or, realizing them, did not consider them worthy of attention. Roads, telephones, mail service, and improved agricultural methods seemed patently desirable to progressive Americans; to install them for the Haitians seemed generously wise. Yet many well-meant efforts came to grief, for the mass of people, lacking a tradition of orderly free government, did not always understand what the Americans were about, while the élite saw in the activities of the Marines a threat to their own dominance as rulers of the country.[10] 175 648 177

The antiquated, but prevalent, notion of the superior mentality of the white race also flourishes in certain quarters among the élite. Many of them say that the Negro can never originate a civilization, and that with the best of education he remains an inferior man, utterly unfitted for government, utterly incapable of making progress. 563 829

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[8] Witness Marthe Oulié's paragraph (*Les Antilles, filles de France* [Paris, 1935], p. 234): "My amiable host (a member of the élite) was triumphant at my surprise and enchantment. 'You did not expect to find a civilized country. What have the spiteful wits told you? That the Haitians worshipped serpents and made human sacrifices? Now, the peasants on the mountain-sides are still very primitive and ignorant, but in the cities you will find many families like ours, cultivated in letters and music, careful and proud of their French culture, and absolutely set against American de-civilization.'" [114] [829]

[9] "Should you like a European to take pictures of the slums of your American cities and of the most degraded of your share-croppers, and then circulate these photographs as typical American scenes?" asked one sensitive Haitian.

[10] See the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 18–19. "Illiteracy keeps the peasant masses politically inarticulate, except in case of mobs or bandit gangs, which formerly infested the countryside and often furnished the forces of revolution. These bandit gangs have been broken up and have disappeared under American rule, but the social forces that created them still remain—poverty, ignorance, and the lack of a tradition or desire for orderly free government. It has been the aim of the American Occupation to try to broaden the base of the articulate proletariat and thus make for a sounder democracy and ultimately provide for a more representative government in Haiti. Hence its work in education, in sanitation, in agencies of communication such as roads, telephones, telegraph lines, and regular mail routes. These things naturally are deemed of secondary importance by the Elite, who see in the rise of a middle class a threat to the continuation of their own leadership." [114] [648]

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In most countries in which Westerners are familiar, social distinctions take the form of classes, which are to a greater or less degree mutable. In Haiti, as we have repeatedly indicated, the distinctions are so rigid that *caste* is the only properly descriptive term. There is hardly a Haitian who would not be able to state immediately whether he or any person he knew was, or was not, élite. So it has been with steady persistence ever since Dessalines and Christophe gave way to Pétion and Boyer. Élite youth marries élite girl, and the folkways of the group are passed on from parent to children, thus perpetuating the distinctions. In the pages which follow, all the marks of separation of castes will be examined: religion, economic occupation, marriage, language, manners, and the rest.

[564] [170]

Certain aspects of the classic example of the caste system, seen in India, are lacking in Haiti. Religion, for instance, does not require caste endogamy, nor does civil law implicitly acknowledge caste lines by reference to the rights of people of a certain occupation. Custom does more than religion and law could, however, to enforce conformity to the understood rules. Probably the most open efforts to enact caste lines into law were the pronouncements of Dessalines and Christophe that all but a few people should be bound to the soil; and Boyer's Code Rural—a feeble echo of days gone by. The two black rulers were able to enforce the distinctions they made; but when they died their feudal arrangements lapsed, while the separation of classes continued. With the recurrence of revolutions after 1843 it behooved the élite, when occasionally they were in authority, not to lay themselves open to [illegible] attack upon grounds of aristocratic presumption, for they never knew when they might need the support of the masses. Any black revolutionary leader would have been able to turn an enacted caste law to his own ends, even if a Senate consisting predominantly of light-colored men had had the power to enact such a law. Time and inertia won the battle for the élite. By not joining issue with the masses at any definite point, the aristocrats gained their end of caste distinction, for they were willing to endure the self-discipline necessary to the maintenance of social standards, as the masses were not.

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Just as in colonial days the ambition of the well-to-do freedman was to go to France for his education and his holidays, so in free Haiti the lure of France has continued to be strong for the aristocrat. There is not a trace of animosity against the country which enslaved the Negroes, and which in 1802–3 tried by trickery to take away the

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[p. 115]

VI

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

1. *French Colonial Backgrounds*

WHEN France was first establishing a foothold in the New World, religion was one of the consuming passions of the French people. Priests accompanied early explorers, missionaries consecrated their lives to conversion of the Indians; monks, nuns, and parish priests were a vital part of the pioneer settlements of New France. Every family in the mother country hoped that at least one of its sons would devote himself to the service of the Church. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were, par excellence, missionary centuries. 175 771

By the time the colony of Saint-Domingue was acquired, however, this religious zeal was on the wane, and just when the colony was becoming prosperous and populous France was entering the phase of her history known as The Enlightenment. Although the growth of the colony is impressive from many points of view, religion is not one of them, for planters intent upon money-making and luxurious living in an exploitative tropical colony gave little energy to spiritual development.[1] The Roman Catholic Church, being the official church of France, was naturally the only important religious organization of the colony; the congregations authorized to send clergy to Saint-Domingue—Carmelites, Capuchins, Dominicans, and Jesuits—divided the territory and work between them. [792]

No doubt the fathers did some assiduous work. Official historians of the Roman Church in Haiti give the definite impression that their task was arduous and not very rewarding.[2] The torrid heat, diseases (especially yellow fever), the long distances and poor means of transportation were discouraging enough; until the middle of the eighteenth century there was the added difficulty of the poor human

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[1] It is revealing to see what characteristics of the culture of their mother country colonists bring with them to a new region. French Canadians, in contrast to French colonists in Saint-Domingue, kept many more customs of old France. See J. G. Leyburn, *Frontier Folkways* (New Haven, 1935), pp. 54-57. [114] [771] [178]

[2] A good account of the inertia of religious life in colonial Saint-Domingue is given in P. A. Cabon, *Notes sur l'histoire religieuse d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1933), chap. I. [114]

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to appoint, curés to the vacant parishes. His independence of action 643
could not fail to give offense to Church authorities. One of his first 659
appointees was a black ex-slave, Félix, who had been a drum major 795
in the native army. Félix was made curé in the important town of [793]
Saint-Marc.

The constitution of his empire (May, 1805) indicates that Dessalines
did not intend to make himself head of the Church, but rather 175
planned a complete separation of Church and State. Article 50 reads: 795
"The law admits no dominant religion"; while the next article 642
grants freedom to all cults and refuses state support to any denomination 659
or minister. No attack was made, therefore, upon Catholicism,
yet the disestablishment of that Church was a serious blow to its
prestige. Not in the specific provisions regarding religion was the
Church most weakened, but rather in the "liberality" of articles
dealing with actions upon which the Church had taken a firm moral
stand. Thus Article 14 declared that "marriage is an act purely civil [582]
and authorized by the government," while Article 15 permits [586]
divorce by the state. Early laws of the empire still further undermined
the position of Church doctrine. Illegitimate children were [848]
granted the same legal rights as legitimate ones—a generous provision
which removed one of the strong reasons for marriage; separation
of husband and wife except by divorce was forbidden, and this
prohibition practically encouraged the divorce disapproved by the
Church; finally, the grounds upon which divorce might be allowed
were broader than those existing anywhere else in the Western
World at the time: mutual consent, application from one party to
the marriage, or simple allegation of incompatibility of temperament
or character.

From the promulgation of this constitution in 1805 and for the 175
next fifty-five years, Haiti was in open schism from the Roman 795
Catholic Church. The Holy See refused to recognize either the 648
Haitian state or the provisions of its constitution, and it declined to
allow priests to enter the country. Certain Haitian presidents were 771
friendly enough to Catholicism, and others were openly desirous 178
of reëstablishing a state religion, but the breach once made was not
healed by mere good wishes. The longer the schism endured, the
farther the people grew away from the doctrines and practices of a
religion in which they had never been firmly grounded. At the
moment of independence, when all minds were more open to new

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175 795 648 771 ● 178 ideas than in later years, the habits of regular attention to religious duties might have been fixed; by 1860 it was too late. Religion existed during those years, but it was a strange gallimaufry of Catholicism and folk belief.

175 795 642 648 659 On the whole, the rulers of young Haiti were tolerant of the Catholic Church even to the point of advancing its interests, in so far as these might benefit the state. Their pronouncements and actions, nevertheless, were not those of ardent personal believers. Pétion's constitution of the republic in 1806 once more established Catholicism as the official Church. What it gave with one hand, however, it took away with the other. Thus:

> *Art. 35.* The Catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion being that of all Haitians, is the religion of the state. It and its ministers will be protected.
>
> *Art. 36.* The law assigns to each minister of that religion the extent of his spiritual administration. These ministers may not, under any pretext, form a body within the state.
>
> *Art. 37.* If in the course of time other religions are introduced, no person shall be hindered, so long as he conforms to the laws, in following the cult he has chosen.

The Catholic, then, is the state religion, but only because the Haitians have heretofore been nominal Catholics. It occupies a position of practical fact which it would lose if by the introduction of other cults Haitians should be drawn away from it. Its ministers will be carefully watched to see that they do not, as a group, try to exert political pressure. And what freedom of action is possible to a church whose ecclesiastical parishes can be limited or extended in size by the civil legislature?

Pétion no more fought religion than he fought any other conventional institution approved by civilized people; but he did little to foster it. He received certain Wesleyan missionaries with considerable hospitality, remarking that "education increases the dignity of [848] mankind." He appeased the good Catholics by repealing the law concerning the rights of illegitimate children, substituting for it a [871] more moderate French rule.[4] Likewise, he invited the Catholic Church to participate in the education of Haitian youth.

[848 578] [4] The French practice allowed an illegitimate child recognized before a wedding equal rights of inheritance with legitimate offspring, while giving only quarter rights to a child recognized after marriage.

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567 along that river, Dahomey was the name of a powerful kingdom under a political administration which embraced a fair amount of interchange of ideas and similarity of social institutions, including religion.

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178 Discretion made the planters separate slaves who knew each other, in order to minimize opportunities for revolt among them. This policy, although it prevented the rapid growth of "slave" customs, at the same time dispersed Dahomeans all over the colony; beliefs and practices held in common among the slaves were likely to take on a Dahomean cast. Since their work was directed, their freedom of movement limited, and their family life broken up, there was practically no opportunity for the outcropping of *any* African ideas relating to economic life, government, property, education, or marriage. The one sphere in which it was possible for Old World beliefs to continue was the religious. No slave dealer could penetrate the minds of his workers or silence their folk tales and folk songs in the evening when work was done; even the strictest plantation owners allowed dances in the slave quarters on Saturday nights and Sunday. It is the dance, a vital part of Dahomean religion, which seems to have formed the nucleus around which the diverse beliefs of African tribesmen grouped themselves, for it was a form of action which need not involve anything more than amusement or emotional release, if the participant were not religiously inclined. In the beginning, as Goethe observes, was the Act. To this simple Act of dancing, the Word, with thought behind it, could easily be added later. Practically all African tribesmen danced; and the numerous Dahomeans had a dance which was ostensibly for diversion but could be turned to a religious purpose as well.
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174 *Here, then, was the skeleton of a slave religion.* Although every single African tribe had its own beliefs and ritual, each (so far as we know) had common elements with every other one. For example, all slaves, whether Senegalese or Angolese, believed in a multiplicity of spiritual beings, some of whom controlled the aspects of nature—lightning and storms, the sea, the sky. They thought that disease and other ill fortune came from spirits who must be placated in order to win back health and well-being. All felt that the normal course of events could be altered by magical spells, formulae, or charms; that one could bring misfortune to an enemy, luck to oneself, or ward off otherwise inevitable fate. Most of them had been accustomed to

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for Vodun theology, nor any established order for the service, variety is one of its chief characteristics. Impossible as it is to cite a definitive list of Vodun beliefs, those most generally held might be combined into a Creed, which would run about as follows: 771

> I believe in scores of gods and spirits, guardians of earth and sky, and of all things visible and invisible;
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> I believe that all these vodun (who are called "loa." or "mystères") are potent, although less majestic than *le bon Dieu* of the Christians; that some of them came with our ancestors from our former home in Africa, while others we have learned about in our Haitian fatherland; that these loa have power to possess us, their worshipers, informing us by inspiration of their needs and desires, which we must faithfully satisfy; that these loa, like us, are capable of good and evil, gentleness and anger, mercy and revenge;
>
> I believe in the efficacy of sacrifice; in the pleasures of living; in respect due to twins; in the careful cult of the dead, who may return to our abodes; in the spiritual causation of diseases and misfortune; in the dance through which we may be "mounted" by our loa; in the possibility of interfering with the normal flow of events by means of magic; in the efficacy of charms and spells; and in the Holy Catholic Church.

Those who conceive of religion in terms of a rigid orthodoxy, monotheism, sin, a moral law, eternal rewards or punishments, will not understand Haitian Vodun. It is as hospitable to new spiritual conceptions as any faith could be, requiring only that the additions be applicable to life as it is lived in the Haitian hills and valleys, and that they adapt their shape and terminology to the native penchant. Monotheism is rarely the practical belief of simple people, but rather of prophets and scholars. It is easy enough to believe in an all-powerful god but much more difficult to arrive at a conception of a unique God. In Dahomey the people had reached some such stage of belief in omnipotence but not of uniqueness. When later, in slavery, transplanted Africans heard the Catholic doctrine of a god who ruled creation by the fiat of his conquering will, they assimilated the idea with a significant change: the Christian God became the Great Master of the other gods. The slaves very simply placed Him at the head of their pantheon. Even today, the first words of a Vodun service are the request for permission from the Great Master to go on with the service. As Dorsainvil says: 771 177 776 [796] 114 178

> This term chosen to designate the supreme God was imposed on them by their environment. The colonist, the master, incarnated for the slave the 776

119 178 776 highest idea of power and action. Logically, he could not conceive of the unique God of the Christians, by analogy and by inspiration, except in terms of the sentiment of fear mingled with the awe which the colonist inspired in him. Once this first step was taken, the rest was only the work of time. In the degree that the holy beings of Catholicism were unfolded to them, the creole Negroes everywhere identified these with the *vodun* (spirits) of the Dahomean cult.[19]

771 776 The Christian God could not stop the "deifying" process, for Vodun must have simple spiritual explanations for daily occurrences. How could a god who ruled the earth clutter his mind with such small details as the mango crop or one's private aches? There was room of necessity for more, and lesser, gods.

771 781 Orthodoxy and monotheism, then, are alien to Vodun; so likewise are the notions of sin and a moral law. These also are refined ideas. The Catholic priests do their best to instill into the minds of the people the Church doctrine on these points, but gluttony, envy, sloth, and other deadly sins are not easy to explain to a people whose worldly goods are pitifully few, whose bellies are never full, and who must work hard to live at all. Just how the simple Haitian interprets the fulminations of the fathers against sin a foreigner can hardly tell, and the priests are not at liberty to reveal the secrets of the confessional.[20] A peasant loves life. His pleasures are simple enough, partly because he lacks money for expensive ones. Puritanical self-searching is alien to the normal Haitian. The touchstone is infallible: so long as life moves along smoothly one need not worry; if misfortune comes, one of the spirits is angry or out of sorts and his worshipers must propitiate him. What spirit could mind a man's dancing, drinking clairin, watching a cockfight, or otherwise indulging himself?

771 776 Vodun does not conceive life to be a struggle between good and evil. Its conception of spirits is anthropomorphic. No man is wholly good or wholly evil, nor is any god; human beings can generally be persuaded into any mood, and so can the gods; as there is variety in human personality, so likewise the gods are not immutable. Some are more to be feared than others, some may be regarded with tender affection, but all are capable of working both weal and woe.

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[19] Dorsainvil, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

[783] [20] A priest once told me that a young Haitian girl in sorrow confessed, as her most heinous sin, that she had given food to a dog. Apparently her idea was that food was too precious to be given away to animals; hence she had sinned.

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080 it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

671 The *Royal Almanac* for the year 1814 touches proudly upon the moral state of the kingdom. The author of the almanac, the Comte 581 de la Limonade, says: "Great attention is paid to morals and manners. 114 Marriage is honored, protected, and encouraged; no Haitian who is 175 unmarried can fill any place of distinction. Divorce is not permitted." [584] All this was true; yet the mass of Haitians still remained unmarried. Nevertheless, the quotation indicates the extent to which Christophe had gone in his effort to reform marriage and morals among his people; to set them in the European tradition and draw them out of their African and colonial backgrounds.

175 While Christophe was trying to effect reforms in the North, 184 Pétion was accepting his Southern folk as they were. Hardly a law 671 during his twelve-year administration touches the subject of marriage. The élite colored people continued to make proper legal 581 marriages and so insure the inheritance of their legitimate children. 428 The common folk lived their family lives without weddings, and if [585] property questions arose, custom ruled, backed by public opinion in their little communities.

105 Such are the backgrounds out of which modern Haitian sex relations have developed. From African tradition came family life, the 175 importance of property to stabilize a union, insignificance of a wed-● 178 ding ceremony, familiarity with matrilineal kinship and descent; 58 from French colonial practice, formal marriage to establish a family 59 with social ambition, casual sex relations for pleasure outside this 421 marriage, the claim of legitimate children to all property (in contrast to folk custom, where few legitimate children were born); from Dessalines, an emphasis upon the African tradition and realism; from Christophe, an insistence upon strict French practice in marriage and in the passage of property.

From among these alternatives Haiti made a choice which is an excellent example of what Keller calls "automatic selection in the mores."[7] There was no congress to select one procedure rather than another. Because Pétion and Boyer followed a *laissez-faire* policy in social matters, the people took the path of least resistance.

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[7] A. G. Keller, *Societal Evolution* (revised ed., New York, 1931), chaps. IV and V.

595 spouses. In the hills more than one peasant house was surrounded, as it would have been in Dahomey, by huts in each of which lived a "wife" of the farmer. Matters are not very different nowadays, except that men have learned the wisdom of not having their women live too close to each other.

162 From the guesses of experienced observers, it is probably not far
582 wide of the mark to estimate that only one couple out of a hundred is married according to the approved mode of the Western World.

The State apparently does not care; or, to put it another way, government officials know how impossible it would be to alter a custom confirmed by long usage; one which, moreover, works well enough, since it causes practically no violence or legal cases for the
795 State to attend to. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, is eager
582 to persuade the people to observe the sacrament of holy matrimony. The priests have assiduously endeavored to explore the peasant mind in order to learn what deters the average person from formal marriage. The reasons for the indifference to weddings might be listed as follows:

581 1. Inertia. There is no convincing reason to vary time-honored
178 practice which works well enough, particularly since a wedding is likely to cause a great disturbance of daily routine and even a measure of jealousy on the part of those who have not made the display.

581 2. Suspicion of legal documents and civil officials. People who put
821 their names (or marks) on documents and who call the attention of governmental officials to themselves are almost sure to rue the day. A man knows what can be demanded of him by custom in his informal unions; but who can say what the law would hold him responsible for?

581 3. Expense. The civil license costs; the priest and his assistants
585 must be paid; to be married in church, one should wear shoes; if one wears shoes, one should dress up to them; a church wedding calls for a feast. At least two days must be spent away from work if the proper formalities are carried out.

581 4. Common sense in an inevitable situation. Both State and
595 Church would try to limit a man to one wife; prosperity might demand two or more. Is it sensible to discriminate against a second woman, who might be just as much help to a man as his legal wife?

581 The Church through its priests works unceasingly to answer these
794 arguments, but without notable success. Inertia is hard to overcome;

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241 day local practice dedicates to work in one's own fields—generally
574 Monday or Tuesday. The prospect of working with one's fellows,
[527] of a midday feast with plentiful drink, of singing, talking, and hearing the news, is enough to induce most of the neighbors to come,
even though the work will be hard. As with American log-rollings
and house-raisings, there is a practical reason for accepting the invitation: by participating in other coumbites a man will be able to
invite his neighbors to help him in his own larger tasks. The work is
[461] done in rhythm[7] as on Southern road gangs in the United States,
with one man specially designated to beat the drum, blow the conch,
or sing a topical song, to set the pace. While the men are at work,
the women prepare the noonday feast.

This typical characteristic of Haitian rural life has been described
114 in detail as it operates near the village of Mirebalais by Prof. Melville
476 J. Herskovits. His contention is that the custom, in general and in
574 detail, derives from Dahomey, West Africa, the home of many of
174 the original slaves.[8] Although his evidence is impressive, there are
171 nevertheless objections to it. Coöperative enterprise for tasks larger
178 than one man can accomplish alone is common in the United States
and in parts of Europe and South America, as well as in Africa. It is
241 not an economic device which strikes one as requiring unusual inventiveness, for cases of it are common even where the participants
have had no previous experience of it. Further, Dahomean practice
could not have been kept up during slave days, nor yet during the
régimes of Toussaint, Dessalines, Christophe, and Pétion. (The first
three required forced labor under overseers, and landownership by
peasants was still rare under Pétion, although a beginning had been
made.) In the thirty years from 1790, when the last slaves arrived,
until Christophe died in 1820, many old ways were certainly forgotten. Not a single one of the numerous books written by visitors
during Boyer's quarter-century, 1818 to 1843, mentions the practice,
which certainly must have struck Englishmen, Frenchmen, and
Americans if it had been characteristic of the peasant life of the time.
If one concludes that the coumbite did not become peasant practice
until the mid-nineteenth century, all possibility of contact with
Negroes familiar with Dahomean routine has disappeared. What

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[7] A Haitian poet, Charles F. Pressoir, entitles a book of his verses *Au Rythme des coumbites* (Port-au-Prince, 1933).

[8] Op. cit., chap. IV.

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> voluntary step towards improving themselves in any one thing. . . . Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coërcion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed. . . . Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries.[13]

An American, Dr. Jonathan Brown of Philadelphia, in 1837 published a volume which in most respects seems quite dispassionate. He says:

[462]
> The females are compelled to perform most of the labor. Those of the country employ themselves in cultivating the soil, while the men spend their time in traversing the country on horseback, in drinking, smoking, and other habits equally unprofitable. The females of the town perform all the retail traffic of the country. . . . They derive a subsistence for themselves and for their families.[14]

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Boyer's secretary of state, Inginac, tried by means of a pamphlet—which few Haitians could have read—to urge the peasants of 1840 to greater activity. He says that although coffee is the chief source of Haitian wealth, although every day small properties have been multiplied, although times are improving, yet the old routines are still followed in coffee cultivation, as if the men would never work and "as if the Haitians were not susceptible of making any progress in the sciences."[15]

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In 1842 an English Quaker, John Candler, wrote that without a modicum of labor the peasants could not subsist at all; "but they do not, and they will not, work hard to please anybody, and hence agriculture languishes, and commerce is stationary."[16] Finally, in 1860, Benjamin Hunt, an American, remarked: "If one wants to be lazy, Hayti is the place. It is possible to get through the day with little annoyance from cold, hunger, or the police, and with the least possible amount of work."[17] Similar testimony could be greatly multiplied. It is only in recent years that any author has affirmed that

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[13] *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 159–162.

[14] *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 281.

[15] Joseph Balthazar Inginac, "*Culture du caféier et préparation de la fève pour être livrée au commerce*" [a pamphlet], (Port-au-Prince, 1840), p. 1.

[16] *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 38.

[17] *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*, p. 12.

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Any foray into possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It
461 might be hazarded that the men felt they had fought for freedom and
so deserved to enjoy its benefits; or that agriculture smacked of the
old days of slavery and should be avoided by the superior male; or
that since ambition for progress was not a Haitian characteristic, and
the work of women produced enough food, there was no reason to
change a routine which did very well. One cannot speak with
definiteness on these matters. And it was upper-class Haitians and
foreigners who adjudged peasant men lazy; slaves and "forced"
laborers always appear lazy to their masters.

462 In modern times at least, male peasants toil strenuously, although
not so continuously as their females. The preparation of the ground
for planting is hard work, and is done entirely by men. Harvesting,
housebuilding, marketing the coffee (one form of marketing not
beneath a man's dignity)—these are men's major contributions to
economic life.

177 People who live in isolation commonly tend to slide back in such
externalities as clothes, manners, neatness of person and of dwelling,
● 178 speech, and social ritual. Almost from the very beginning of Haitian
history, most of the people were effectively isolated from the rest of
the world, so that the superficial aspects of daily life exhibited to all
visitors the spectacle of retrogression.

175 Christophe, who had frequent English visitors in his kingdom,
656 forced his subjects to dress neatly. After his time no ruler made
281 regulations for dress. The men commonly wore a pair of cotton
trousers and an abbreviated shirt, while women's dress was a loose-
fitting garment which might be called a Mother Hubbard. Children
could, and can now, be seen up to the age of four or five without
[369] any clothes at all. The nearer the countrypeople live to towns, where
the example of the élite is before them, the better their dress is
likely to be.

342 Slave cabins on the former plantations were inhabited by the free
Haitians until decay set in and the cabins fell down. They were
ordinarily superseded by huts which could be constructed of withes
[333] and thatch. The British Minister during the eighteen-twenties saw a
man near Plaisance building his house, "plastering the wattling, of
which the walls were composed, with a mixture of mud and ashes,"
using his hand as a trowel.[18] Almost never did a hut have more than

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[18] Mackenzie, op. cit., I, 130.

two rooms to house the whole family. "In these huts, filth and every 342
species of uncleanliness prevail, for the people give themselves up to [515]
their indolent and lazy habits. It is common to see the pigs and
poultry herding with the family."[19]

The furnishings in the huts were as simple as the construction. 352
Rarely was there more than one bed, if that; the children of the
family used mats for sleeping. A table, a stool, a couple of patched [415]
chairs, calabash bowls, an iron pot or two (and in later days, discarded gasoline tins), comprise the household equipment.

The fine roads of the French régime became rutted and washed, 653
were overgrown with weeds, and soon reverted to wasteland or 492
became nothing more than paths. Carriages ceased to be of any use, 493
and there were few wagons; donkeys and horses became the regular
means of transportation, and this was true until the Americans began 491
to build roads again in 1916. The colonial régime had left a legacy of bridges, public buildings, parks, irrigation ditches; practically every improvement of this nature crumbled in slow decay and was
not replaced. The temperate Dr. Brown closed his account of the 114
Haiti of 1836 with the following paragraph: 105

> To sum up all that might be said upon the actual condition of Hayti, poverty and degradation stare one in the face wherever he goes—and the state of the whole island will be fully understood in the United States when it is bluntly asserted, that the country is one continuous negro village, built of mud cabins, and unfurnished with the usual comforts of life. The population is, with small exceptions, an indolent, naked multitude, without sustenance or a disposition to make exertions to obtain it; without enormous vices, but petty and insignificant in every thing relating to human character, and not many removes from the tribes upon the Niger in point of civilization. The fact is indisputable, that as a nation the blacks of Saint Domingo are in a retrograde movement as regards intellectual improvement, and no obstacle seems to exist to prevent this descent to barbarism. The government and institutions of the country must for the present remain unstable, and it is difficult to pronounce what the changes involved in the future will produce.[20]

Progress, as Westerners understand it, comes through contacts and 177
competition, both of which were lacking to Haiti in large measure 178
throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. While externally

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[19] Franklin, op. cit., p. [illegible].
[20] Op. cit., II, [illegible].

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177 the country slowly became dilapidated, its economic and social insti-
178 tutions were taking on the unplanned characteristics already de-
scribed. The only disturbing element in Haitian life was that of
political machinations by ambitious military men. When these
reached a peak in 1915 the United States intervened. For the first
time in a century, really, the Haitian came into contact with the
outside world.

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XII

POLITICS

TO write of the politics of one country in the language of 640 another is almost certain to foster misconceptions. Political terminology grows out of national and local experience, so that a Liberal party may actually be reactionary, a Radical group conservative, and a Conservative bloc progressive; the names are entirely the product of time and circumstance. And to generalize upon the shades of political opinion in a country is almost surely to do violence to partisan sentiment, as well as to truth itself. If, on the other hand, one attempts to deal justly with each development of political thought, one is immediately caught in the web of tedious detail.

All these reflections apply to Haiti. Her political history is endlessly 175 complicated, not only in the sequence of events, but in the 114 intertwining prejudices of color, caste, sectionalism, education, heritage. Haitian writers have concerned themselves more frequently with politics than with any other subject; their diagnoses and remedies are familiar to the thought of élite citizens. Yet it is doubtful whether these authors have ever affected the political reality, except possibly in 1843. Theory and practice have consistently diverged: both form a part of the political complexion of Haiti, yet to treat either in detail would require an overbalanced discussion of political matters in a country nine tenths of whose people are normally unconcerned with politics. Let us then try to discover briefly how rulers have achieved and lost power, and how they have managed their government.

Of all the social institutions which had to find their own shape in 175 1804 upon the achievement of independence, the one for which the 178 people as a whole had least preparation was government. Assuming the major institutions of a society to consist of economic life, govern- 64 ment, religion, and marriage, one realizes the problems which faced the free Haitians in all of these categories. Satisfactory or partial, we have seen the solutions arrived at in all respects except government—solutions which modified and adapted old French colonial practice or African tradition. Neither French nor African guides would serve in politics, however. People who have just thrown off the yoke of a

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● 178 slave system are not likely to assume it again; and the aristocrats,
64 ever intent upon forgetting their African forebears, would certainly
not turn to the Dark Continent for political inspiration.

175 Although the revolution had brought to the fore men of military
642 experience and even genius, it had driven out or killed every single
701 person of experience in civil government. The affranchis of the old
régime had been denied political rights long before 1791; by 1804
643 few could have had any memory of active participation in government.[1] Toussaint was dead. The only authority of any significance was military. Consequently the new state was built upon army control and directed by army officers. Dessalines as commander in chief took the title of governor-general, later of emperor, but was in reality a military ruler. Fearful as he was of a new French invasion, he set his generals over the districts, organized his people as an army ready for immediate mobilization, and ruled as dictator.

This was all the Haitians had as political background: a military
175 dictatorship. The Founding Fathers of Haiti, if so they might be
642 called, had almost nothing to work with, nothing to build upon: neither a Magna Carta of the Blacks, nor any precedent of an independent Negro state anywhere in this white man's world; neither heritage of local responsibility and political debate to sow the seeds of democracy, nor any example of self-government in the American tropics to offer a pattern[2]—many of the known forms of government were a practical impossibility for the Haitians because of their need of continued defense against foreign enemies, their slave heritage, their inexperience in self-government, their complete lack of a middle class.

175 Hardly one tenth of the people in any case was capable of giving
668 detailed thought to the form which government should take. The
mass of ex-slaves had been fighting only *against* slavery, against the hated white rulers, not *for* democracy or any other abstraction. Their freedom achieved, they would not be the ones to make decisions.
[642] All political choices would be made by the generals, by men of property and position, by the few whose persistent ambition made them stand out from the masses.

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[1] Such participation in French colonial politics would have been before the restrictive laws of 1771.

[2] It must be recalled that Haiti was the second free country to be established in the Western Hemisphere, and that Liberia, in Africa, was still far in the future.

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Even Geffrard the reformer,

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175 ably the ablest president in the second half-century, who was pledged
643 to reduce the expenses of government (a promise which, since he
661 was accustomed to a life of penury, should have been easy to fulfill), increased his own salary to $50,000 a year, and allowed himself $20,000 more annually for secret service and a similar sum "for the encouragement of arts and sciences." He bought two estates with government money; the meat bill of his family was charged to the budget of his bodyguard, and the family champagne bill to a hospital. After Geffrard, the presidency was openly regarded as the juiciest financial plum in Haiti which, if one could pluck it, would justify the necessary expenditures for a revolution. It seems from contemporary comment, indeed, that Geffrard's actions aroused not censure but rather envy, as if every ambitious Haitian would have welcomed the opportunity to do likewise. The bitingly critical Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, railed with some justice, "Every Haitian appears fully persuaded that his countrymen never seek office except for the purpose of improving their private fortunes."[13]

175 The legislature was never a real check upon the President. It was
648 useful to him at times when he wished to delay action on some
646 embarrassing imbroglio with a foreign power, for by referring a measure to the Senate he could stall it in tedious debate. Almost without exception, however, the legislature consisted of the President's men. Its halls were palaces of idle oratory. One whole session was devoted to a discussion of fitting the hall with cushioned seats; another to the propriety of appointing an interpreter for representatives who understood only Créole and not French. To make a man a Senator was a satisfactory way of paying a political debt. To be a Senator was to have social prominence, a salary of $1,600 (decidedly a competence in nineteenth-century Haiti), an opportunity to speak before an audience—and no real responsibility.

• 178 One may grant without debate the difficulties facing this small and poor country, a Negro state with great white neighbors who regarded it with something less than deference. Yet Haiti in its early days had real promise. Wherein lay its defects? Haitian thinkers knew the answers, and frequently indicated themselves.

175 The want of education was a basic weakness. Those who believe
871 in democracy need no rehearsal of the benefits of popular enlighten-
565 ment. Because the great Negro heads of state were themselves ille-

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658 [13] *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 183.

perfectly educated, and because other matters seemed infinitely more 175
pressing than the setting up of schools, the early Haitians, united in 871
1804, fell apart within a single generation. On one hand were the 565
élite and a few other townspeople who knew at least something of 658
the outside world; on the other the masses of toiling countryfolk to whom tiny Haitian valleys were the whole universe. The young men of these two classes coming to power could not understand each other; they could not make concessions to each other; and as they fought for what they held true, each grew suspicious of the other if not permanently hostile. The lack of common understanding might still have been repaired in any one generation, but no single president had the vision to inaugurate universal education. Aside from the expense, certain powerful élite citizens often expressed their doubts as to the educability of the peasants; as property owners they would undoubtedly have objected to the unsettling of the economic order, which was based upon the work of an ignorant mass of blacks.[16]

Without education, the political sphere went unenriched by any 175
flow of new blood from the people. Politics existed in a vacuum. The 871
earthy, candid criticisms of a politically conscious folk never invigor- 64
ated the discussion of national affairs. Without education, the people 66
had no standards of comparison of Haiti with other nations, and were the easy dupes of whatever insurrectionary agitator could persuade them that their daily woes were caused by the current administration. Without education, high political office became a prerogative of the few, a contest between the Ins and the Outs, a path to personal wealth. Without education, Haiti could never be more than a dictatorship by a man or a clique, her stability endangered with the downfall of each incumbent, for dictatorships rarely provide for continuity in government.

Another great weakness was the notion that national happiness 175
could be achieved by political means primarily. After the germinal 181
ideas of Christophe and Pétion, which had a basis in economic be- 178
havior, hardly another important concept came out of a century of presidents. Haitian politicians have been great arrangers: they have given the country eighteen constitutions and innumerable codes, all admirable in their loving solicitude for precise detail. The common feeling of political aspirants has been, "If we are given power, all will

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[16] This argument is clearly stated in Madiou, op. cit., III, 176 ff.

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178 prosper." Yet every change of administration saw merely a new
181 embroidery on the old theme of sterility.[17]

175 The further weakness of social or class consciousness has already
565 been treated at length. It kept the whole nation divided from top to bottom, setting black against colored, North against South, countryside against town. It meant a perennial civil war, latent at times, but constantly breaking out in new insurrections.

175 Some day a diligent scholar may try to catalogue the revolutions
669 which Haiti has undergone. Magloire discusses sixty-nine "impor-
701 tant" ones between 1806 and 1879;[18] but the latter date was merely the threshold of renewed revolutionary activity. There seems to have been very little pattern in these uprisings, except that almost never were they a spontaneous revolt of the masses, as the Slave Insurrection of 1791 had been. The peasants were constantly being impressed into service with the army of a general who had presidential ambitions. From the middle years of the nineteenth century certain peasants found fighting a more profitable trade than any other, and began to hire themselves out as mercenaries. In the North these professional guerrilla warriors were known as *cacos*, in the South as *piquets*. Their methods were those of terror and rapine. They were a constant menace to the peace, and their suppression was one of the announced purposes of the American Occupation, for every revolutionary chief felt it necessary to hire their services.

175 Another recognized procedure of revolution was incendiarism.
369 Haitian politics is almost wholly the affair of townsmen, and more
669 narrowly of the men of the six important towns—Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Jérémie, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, and Saint-Marc. Except for their principal buildings and villas, these towns are constructed of wood or other inflammable material. Leaders of insurrections therefore have habitually set fire to the poorer sections of the towns, and as frequently as not this threat has won over the populace, who preferred overthrowing the government to having their homes burned. Support of the insurrection becomes a form of fire insurance. Such a state of affairs is eloquent testimony to the cynical attitude of the political leaders toward the masses.

[illegible] A revolution directed by a general of real ambition was likely to

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[17] Auguste Magloire, *Histoire d'Haïti d'après un plan nouveau* (Port-au-Prince, 1909), I, 230, 242, 250-251, develops this theme at length.

[18] *Ibid.*, Vol. II.

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can "advice and approval," rather than with the legislature subject to 175
popular control. Even under such restrictions the politically minded 648
found ways of exerting pressure on the Marine authorities. 666

Out of the darkest days of military subjection by a foreign power 642
came a changed order of politics in the country. The practically unbroken 175
line of dull incompetents who had come into the presidency 643
ended; instead of ignorant army leaders, educated men were once
more in office; instead of Northern Negroes, *élites* of Port-au-Prince;
instead of benighted martinets bewildered by world affairs, men
who, if not great statesmen, at least had minds capable of understanding
Haiti's relation to international economics and politics.

The élite were back in power. In the mind of every friend of Haiti 175
arose the question whether the events between 1879 and 1915 had 642
taught them lessons which would make their return to responsibility
productive of great things for the country. Because of the abnormal
situation resulting from the Occupation, the world depression, and
the briefness of their new ascendancy, one cannot yet speak with
assurance. Nevertheless, there are few encouraging signs. Political [661]
office is still regarded by most candidates in terms of their own
advancement rather than service to Haiti. Very little has been done [666]
to extend the base of voting by developing local responsibility and [565]
education among the masses. Élite youths still receive a classical
education, still disdain manual labor, still cherish the ideal of a
graceful life of ease. The president still rules as an autocrat supported [643]
by the gendarmerie—substitute for the army of former days. One
can see no decrease in social distinctions or in the disdain of the élite [565]
for peasant people; on the contrary, there has even been an increase
of this feeling because the Occupation (through its Agricultural
Service particularly) seemed to open paths of development to the
peasants. Social antagonism, not social responsibility, still underlies
political life.[20]

To every one of these strictures there is a plausible reply. It is no 178
light matter to unsettle the minds of nine tenths of a population by 65
education, to cause an economic revolution by improving agricultural
techniques, to admit to political life a people unaccustomed to

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[20] Dr. Jean Price-Mars, in *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), passim, [114]
especially pp. 51 ff., urges the élite to accept their responsibilities rather than rest upon [565]
the debilitating assurance of their innate superiority.

178 it. Moreover, the Haitian budget is in the neighborhood of seven
65 million dollars, for which sum not much in the way of great improvement for three million people can be expected. The task of regenerating Haiti calls for self-sacrificing genius—at present the élite hardly qualify either as self-denying servants of the public or as geniuses.

175 Haitian affairs during the 1930's were under the direction of President Sténio Vincent, an able man to whose credit much can be
643 said. He devoted himself to his task with assiduity, talking face to
642 face with the peasants in Créole, urging them to assist in reforestation
648 and to use wisdom in crop rotation. He settled serious disputes with
241 the neighboring Dominican Republic in amicable fashion. It was he who carried on the delicate and successful negotiations with President Roosevelt to give Haiti control of her own affairs once more. In coffee culture, assistance to trade, financial matters, and other economic details, he often proceeded expertly, particularly in view of the world depression which began as he assumed office. On the other hand, Vincent made the legislature his servant rather than a partner. He was a dictator (fortunately a benevolent one) who changed the constitution by highhanded methods in order to gain his own reëlection. His régime rested upon his alliance with the efficient Garde d'Haïti. There were few signs of democracy or of respect for civil liberties, as Americans understand those terms, in Vincent's eleven years.

175 The spectator has a feeling that he has seen all this before, when
643 for example Geffrard was elected to assure parliamentary government, only to become an effectively benevolent dictator as soon as the legislature opposed him. Geffrard was on the whole a good president, as Vincent was; but the former did not succeed in setting Haiti upon the path of economic and social security, and one hardly dared expect it of his modern counterpart.

175 In April, 1941, Élie Lescot, former Haitian Minister to the United
643 States, was elected as the thirtieth president of the republic. Vincent had refused to call a plebiscite to approve an extension of his presi-
648 dential term for an additional five years, as he had done in 1935 near the end of the six-year term to which he was elected in 1930. Lescot had begun his presidency with many advantages, chiefly the friendly support of his predecessor, his acquaintance with United States officials, and a recent negotiated pact by which American aid will

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3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron-
646 age for the president to dispense, and has preserved the semblance of
642 republican government; but hardly half a dozen legislative sessions
in all Haitian history have contributed seminal ideas in politics or
initiated true reforms. How could they, indeed, when the president
was consistently a dictator of policy?

666 4. The undemocratic nature of the vote. Senators are chosen by
the representatives, and the two groups together have generally
642 elected the president, when he did not come to power by revolution.
The only chance people have had to vote has been for local
officials and representatives. In these cases, the vote has been limited
to the élite and the army, with the president's henchmen counting
the ballots. Since the Occupation there have been plebiscites on
constitutional changes, the people having the right to vote Yes or No.

692 5. The subservience of the courts to the president. They have been
filled with president's men, generally astute enough to consult presi-
643 dential wishes before handing down a decision. Foreign merchants
642 soon learned that they could expect little "justice" from the courts if
their own cause conflicted with special Haitian interests. Foreign
diplomats likewise learned that in crises the courts could involve the
simplest issue in such verbal complexity that months of patience
would be necessary to unwind the red tape.

641 6. The pliability of "constitutional rights." Freedom of speech and
661 of the press has been notably lacking, although scurrilous attacks on
the administration's enemies have often been permitted. Legislators
642 have been expelled. Graft has flourished. In 1833, for example, two
representatives were expelled from the House "for systematically
opposing the measures of the executive, and persisting in a demand
for a statement of public expenditures." A century later a senator was
expelled for almost the same reasons.

701 7. Militarism. Only in this respect is any real change apparent since
● 178 the American Occupation. The army was always large up to 1915,
and so constituted an economic drain as well as a political menace.
642 Generals had great power: they ruled each department and each
669 arrondissement, were subject only to the president, and were at the
bottom of every revolutionary movement.[22] Since the Occupation

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[22] In 1842, when the population was still less than a million, there were in the district governments 9 generals, 63 colonels, 48 lieutenant colonels, 9 captains, 1 lieutenant, and 26 medical officers; and in the standing army 33 colonels, 63 lieutenant colonels, 823 captains, 634 lieutenants, 577 sublieutenants and ensigns, 6,813 noncommissioned officers, and 25 medical officers. The army had 28,000 soldiers and cost almost $800,000 a year. See John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 86 ff.

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numbers in the army have been radically reduced; yet in that very 178
fact there is the possibility for the only armed persons in Haiti, the 642
present Garde d'Haiti, to effect political coups. But at least the budget 669
is not strained by the salaries of thousands of unnecessary soldiers,
as was true in pre-Occupation days.

8. The separation of the masses from government. By providing a 641
minimum of local government, but that fairly effective, the national
government has been able to keep the peasants out of all but revolu- 184
tionary politics. Rural communities have ordinarily got along well
enough without formal government, so that the history of Haitian
political thought and the analysis of Haitian political forms would
treat of affairs interesting to only a fraction of the population.

It need hardly be repeated, after a reflection upon these apparent 642
permanencies of political life, that Haiti is not a democracy.

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175 ment that two thirds of the members of either Chamber must be
642 present before a law could be voted—a stipulation making it possible
[646] for any clique to hold up legislation by absenting itself.

1874. The constitution of Domingue who, having defeated the [643] Liberals, promulgated a constitution "profoundly modifying" the language of the 1867 document. It legally concentrated power in the hands of the president—where, indeed, it had always been in spite of constitutional declarations.

1879. Salomon's first constitution, which professed to be a re-examination of Haitian institutions, but was actually not different in essentials from the document of 1846. The line from Pétion to Riché to Salomon and his successors was the main one from which deviations, such as those of Soulouque, occurred.

1886. Salomon's second constitution, a mild revision of his first.

1889. Hyppolite, the new president, felt it necessary to have a new ● (178) constitution, although like the constitution of 1886 this was little more than a revision of that of 1879. Under the 1889 document Haiti continued to function, more and more haltingly, up to the time of the American Occupation.

[648] 1918. The constitution drawn up in Washington[9] and forced through in Haiti by a farcical plebiscite. Its most debated provision [423] was the elimination of the prohibition against ownership of land by foreign whites, thus ending the one common point in all previous constitutions since 1805. For the rest, it changed little of the actual [641] structure of Haitian government, but provided a great number of unaccustomed democratic rights: freedom of assembly, trial by jury in political cases, direct election of senators, submission of amendments to popular vote, freedom of the press.

1927. Although this is considered merely a revision of the 1918 [641] constitution, its changes were actually more noteworthy than many expected by the so-called new constitutions. Thirteen amendments were carried by popular vote, again so overwhelming as to be ridiculous, restricting many of the democratic liberties granted in 1918 which had proved embarrassing both to President Borno and

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[9] Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his campaign for the vice-presidency of the United States in 1920, claimed that he had written most of this constitution while he was Woodrow Wilson's assistant-secretary of the navy. (See the *New York Times*, August 19, 1920.) The constitution was approved in Haiti by a vote of 69,337 to 335.

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lar except in raw form, in which it had an annual sale of only a few thousand pounds. Other subordinate exports were cotton, logwood, lignum vitae, mahogany, tortoise shells, hides, cacao, cassia, wax, ginger, bullocks' horns, and tobacco—and many of these came primarily from the Dominican rather than the Haitian part of the island, during the twenty-two year period of union. The imports were mainly clothing and provisions. That an agricultural country should need to bring in flour, butter, cheese, lard, beef, pork, candles, and especially—in the light of former days—refined sugar, is eloquent testimony to the degree to which food production had declined since colonial times. Other imports were more to be expected, since manufacture had never developed: linen, cotton goods of all kinds, some few woolens, cutlery, iron goods, wines and brandies, oil, lumber, coarse iron goods, earthenware, tin plates, and minor articles.[11]

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Gone now were the days of big things in Haiti. Estates of thousands of acres would in Boyer's time have been only a liability. Profits were measured, or rather hoped for, in terms of hundreds rather than thousands of dollars.[12] Saint-Domingue of the 1780's was one of the exciting parts of the world to traders; Haiti of fifty years later was little more than a vague name except to specialists. Any country relying for its economic security upon one crop and its sale in a foreign market must expect vicissitudes in its income. Haiti had these in full measure. And so the prosperity of the country steadily diminished.[13]

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[11] See the very careful report to Great Britain by her consul, Charles Mackenzie, in 1830: *Notes on Haiti*, II, 173-190.

[12] Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document XI) reports in 1829: "Generally speaking, no sugar is manufactured on the estates devoted to the cultivation of the sugar cane; the juice is either inspissated to a coarse syrup, and sold for common use, or distilled into a very inferior rum, called here 'Tafia.'" Then, citing the case of Tor, an estate formerly owned by Pétion but in 1829 by Boyer, he reports: "Formerly 1,700 carreaux were in cane; 1,000 slaves were employed on it; 3 sugar mills were constantly at work, and [illegible] clayed sugar was made. Now only about 7 carreaux are in cultivation; 50 laborers are employed; the only produce is a little syrup and tafia, which last is retailed in a small shop by the side of the road, in front of the president's residence."

[13] These vicissitudes have been frequently noted. Droughts and hurricanes, pests and earthquakes, were causes of constant apprehension. The chief forces at work to diminish Haitian prosperity were two: the division of land into small parcels at home, and the competition of other countries with Haitian coffee abroad. The price of coffee had declined in all the European markets, making the return to the cultivator exceedingly small.

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United Kingdom, the United States, and Haiti, in proportion to population, were 185, 165, and 125,[18] yet Haiti had no carrying trade while the other two countries had, and so the profits were drained from the land.[19] 175 565 439

In short, as Haiti became accustomed to managing her own affairs, she became content with—or at least, reconciled to—little things. Inertia and tradition worked in their persistent fashion, with no effective stimulation from outside to combat them. From tradition and seclusion springs prejudice, and this became obvious whenever a change was proposed, particularly one which suggested bringing white people back to the country. To the élite it might mean the end of their social supremacy; to the masses, the end of their independence of daily action. The prejudice against sugar making was rooted in the same kind of suspicion. When a large landowner tried to institute a sugar mill on his estate, he met an adamant refusal of his hired workers to labor in it: "*Moué pas esclave!*" (I'm no slave!) The Negroes even disliked a bell to ring them to work on a plantation, for it suggested the slavery of the old régime. 178 433 [446]

Just before the Civil War in the United States a humanitarian gentleman developed a project of conducting numerous free American Negroes to Haiti in a planned migration. He discussed in a pamphlet[20] all the possible trades which might flourish in that country, if the migrants were to assume the position of a middle class; but his list is significantly small—sixteen occupations, on the order of tailoring, coopering, and blacksmithing, were all he could think of.[21] He made three comments which he hoped would attract the Negro Americans, as to a virgin field of opportunity: that in the 175 449 105

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[18] John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 111–113, cites these figures, and says: "[Thus] Hayti, poor, and despised as she is, has a commerce, in native produce, nearly three-fourths as large, *in proportion to her population*, as our own United Kingdom, which is the great manufacturing part of the world; and seven-eighths as large as that of the United States, where the staple exports are produced by the labour of 3,000,000 slaves!" [423]

[19] Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document V) reports that in 1825 exports were valued at $3,793,758, and imports at $4,680,752; the trading was carried on in 532 *foreign* ships, of which 372 were American, 78 British, and 63 French. No Haitian ship traded abroad.

[20] Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans.* See particularly pp. 7-9.

[21] His complete list is: tailor, dressmaker, baker, cabinetmaker, carpenter, mason, lime-burner, distiller, cooper, wheelwright, saddler, blacksmith, sawyer, tanner, small-boat maker, painter.

XV

HAITIAN PROBLEMS

FOR a citizen of the United States or a European country, 178
national problems have to do with external as well as internal 66
affairs. Foreign relations, armaments, international trade, 645
treaties and commitments, loom as large as do unemployment, business depression, labor troubles, and social maladjustment. Political parties rise and fall with their promises or failures to deal successfully with matters arising from the country's position relative to world movements. In Haiti such generalizations do not hold. Her international relations have been and are comparatively minor, while her internal problems have been of a different order from those which trouble most of the rest of the Western World. This is not meant to imply that a world depression leaves Haiti unscathed, or that the country does not suffer when its trade in coffee is interrupted, but rather that its persistent problems would continue to exist whatever the state of world politics and economics.

Contacts of the Haitian people with the outside world between 175
1804 and 1915 were meagre. The slaughter of whites by Dessalines, 648
the economic decline of the country, unwillingness of white nations to treat with a Negro state, the schism in the Catholic Church, restrictive legislation against white foreigners, general illiteracy of the people—all these shut Haiti off from the world. Christophe, it is true, invited in a few English schoolmasters and agricultural experts, [871]
but these remained only a short while and had little influence even [242]
among the élite. For a century Haiti saw no foreigners except the [797]
few traders at seaports, an occasional Wesleyan missionary, a limited number of consuls and ministers, certain travelers interested in odd corners of the earth, and, after 1860, Catholic priests and sisters. For the peasants there ceased to be any knowledge of the world outside of Haiti; for the élite France once more became the centre of the social universe, as it had been for the affranchis in colonial times. [871]
From Boyer's time onward élite youths went to Paris for an education, if they could afford it; the "culture" they acquired there had little relationship to Haitian problems.

Foreign relations, in the political sense, revolved during most of [illegible]

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Besides the figures given above must be set there of the government

budget, which is annually in the neighborhood of $7,000,000, and of its annual imports and exports, neither of which generally exceeds $10,000,000 a year. Chicago, with its population of three million, has an annual budget of about $275,000,000, aside from state and federal services. 652 [439]

To care for all the needs of three million people in Haiti there is a sum of money less than that available annually to several of our American universities. Out of the seven million dollars must come all salaries of officials, legislators, judges, policemen, schoolteachers; the wages of all janitors and day laborers employed by the government; the upkeep of all schools, roads, lighthouses, experiment stations; the maintenance of such important public services as health, sanitation, education, soil development, reforestation. Since there are few towns, practically every improvement which takes place must be paid for by the central government. [369]

Haiti's growth in population is not a new thing. It has been increasing steadily since 1804 while the soil of the country was being worn out and foreign trade grew stagnant. The country is entirely agricultural, there being absolutely no manufacturing industry worth the name. The people consequently live upon a subsistence economy. The soil is still fertile enough to preserve life in the teeming population, though undernourishment is general. Most of the people have no "artificial" wants and could not satisfy them under present conditions even if they had. 161 (134] [439] 433 164 [134] [511]

Assuming the census of Dessalines in 1805 to be even approximately accurate, the population is now eight times what it was then. The working of the Law of Population[3] is implacable: if population increases while economic efficiency remains static or declines, either there will be an increasing death rate or the standard of living must sink—or both. In the case of Haiti, economic efficiency is certainly not what it was under the forced-labor system of Dessalines: the death rate has been continuously high; it is the standard of living which has suffered. 161 433 178 [165] [511]

To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of overpopulation one o-o-o

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[3] "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." (For an amplification of this discussion on overpopulation, see the note on p. 320.) The law of population as stated here is a modification of that given by Sumner and Keller, *The Science of Society*, I, 46; their statement, in turn, is that of Malthus with the added cultural items of economic efficiency and the standard of living. [114]

2. *Health*

Historians who seek to explain the rise and fall of nations in terms of a single cause might do worse than hit upon health and disease as the all-important explanation. Unless spectacular epidemics have appeared in a country's history, the average person is rarely aware of how diet may affect a people, or of how backwardness in achievement is often directly related to disease. It may well be that the development of *medical* history will yet cause a radical revision of certain philosophies of history.

146 "The diet of the Haitian peasants has not improved since the
slavery period," says Dr. Camille Lhérisson.[5] When people are
164 hungry in Haiti, they eat (if they can find food) until their hunger
has been appeased; but what they eat, though it may fill their
stomachs, is often decidedly deficient in the proper nourishment.
Mangoes, yams, and beans are common enough so that few people
actually go hungry; eggs, milk, meat, and many other essentials of a
balanced diet, on the contrary, are scarce. People do not die of
hunger, but rather of the diseases which accompany malnutrition. It
is said that many peasants allow the fires in their homes to die out
when the mangoes begin to ripen, subsisting almost wholly upon
this fruit for weeks. One sees nearly naked children whose distended
[261] bellies are testimony to faulty diet. There are frequent cases of
geophagy (eating of dirt) both by children and by adults in their
unreasoned craving for certain dietetic elements; one result of the
practice is the swallowing of eggs and larvae of intestinal parasites.

● 178 Scientific progress in medicine during the nineteenth century and
743 the first years of the twentieth passed Haiti by completely. There
759 were during the whole history of the country until 1915 hardly a
score of reputable physicians; even had there been doctors, hospital
facilities and equipment were lacking. Dr. Robert P. Parsons de-
174 scribes Haiti in 1915 as "an unspeakable hotbed of diseases, ranking
164 second to none in the world in downright rottenness." He further
described the "mass of three million people, sick, suffering beyond
all power of words to describe, crippled, and weakened from the
ravages of a host of diseases (for the most part preventable and
curable), pitifully helpless and hopelessly resigned to their lot."[6]

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[5] "Diseases of the Peasants of Haiti," *American Journal of Public Health*, XXV, No. 8 (August, 1935), 924.

[6] *History of Haitian Medicine* (New York, 1930), pp. 4-5.

3. *Education*

871 To a people like the Americans who accept democracy as desirable, and regard universal education as a necessary basis for democracy, it would seem a simple matter for the Haitians to build schools all over the countryside, pass laws requiring attendance, and so within a decade, or at the outside a generation, reform the whole country. To the American, education is the fount from which all democratic blessings flow. For the Haitian the problem is neither so clearly defined nor so simply solved.

585 871 The élite, who are solidly in control of the government, are aristocrats partly (largely, one might even say) because they are educated. Because of the maxim of Haitian life since the beginning that a literate man should not do manual labor, any program which proposed universal education would cut the ground from under the present social structure by giving the masses equal opportunities with the élite, and at the same time ruin the economic organization by making peasants want to desert field labor for professions and business. An ordinary degree of self-interest is quite sufficient to explain the lack of enthusiasm of the ruling class when the subject of general education is broached.

871 Good reasons are often given by people in lieu of real reasons for their actions. One of the good reasons advanced by Haitian ministries for the failure of the government to promote universal education is its cost. Those American states whose population is prevailingly rural know the validity of this reasoning. With children [369] scattered over the rural regions—and nine out of ten Haitians do not live in towns or large villages—it would require thousands of new school buildings to reach the prospective students. Salaries of teachers, purchase of supplies, and general upkeep would have to be added annually to the national budget in addition to the initial outlay for the erection of school buildings. Here one comes up immediately against the unyielding fact of the puny national income. Its $7,000,000 could under no circumstances be stretched to cover an architectural program commensurate with Haiti's educational needs.

871 178 Another good reason for the failure of democratic education is the demonstrated apathy of the masses. In the zeal for improvement during the early days of the Occupation, rural schools were estab-

lished in many parts of the country. Attendance was fair for a few 871
days, then rapidly declined. It is obviously a task requiring patience, 177
persistence, originality, and tact on the part of the teacher to keep the students interested enough in school to make them attend regularly, for certainly the parents, who themselves have had no education, will not force their children to attend. On the contrary, the average peasant parent feels it much more important for his children to be at work in the fields, doing something useful, than to waste time learning to read and write—accomplishments which peasants have done without from time immemorial. Forced attendance is clearly out of the question. Obviously, too, at the small wages paid [875] to country teachers the necessary qualities of personality are uncommon, to say the least. Five thousand men and women with the consecration of missionaries would be required even to begin the work of general education.

A practically insoluble problem, given current attitudes, is that of 871
the language to be used in rural schools, assuming that these are 191
built. The only official language of Haiti is French; the only language 875
understood by the masses is Créole, which in spite of its French origin
is as different from that tongue as Dutch from German. Now every 184
Haitian, high and low, knows Créole, so that the question immediately arising is: Why should not the rural teachers teach in Créole? The answer involves every sort of inward prejudice, yearning, and instilled doctrine. The teacher is almost sure to be struggling up to the élite class, and to require him to deny himself the luxury of speaking French (to him almost a patent of nobility) would be heart-rending. Likewise, he would have his "good" reason for teaching school in French: the unity of the country demands a single language; all schoolbooks are in French, none in Créole; and Créole has no literature, not even an accepted spelling. The fact remains that except in rare instances all schoolteachers use French to their pupils, and not one peasant out of a hundred can even guess what is being said in that language.

Assuming that schools were available, as well as trained teachers 871
willing to speak the folk language, the next problem would be the curriculum. The whole tradition of élite education is literary, not practical. Teachers trained in this tradition might teach Racine and Montaigne, but not soil conservation and new methods of planting. Peasants with a knowledge of French literature would, of course, be

175 This was the situation in Haiti after 1791, and especially after
178 1804. The boundary walls of a slave economy, carefully built by the French in the eighteenth century and scrupulously guarded by all the whites, were smashed. The constricted limits in which Negro life had moved during slavery now ceased to exist as a channel. For years there was an unceasing effort on the part of Haitian leaders to give a new direction to the life of the blacks, but all those leaders (except Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe) found it more discreet, more congenial, even more logical, to follow the tide rather than to try to stem and direct it.

Between 1791 and 1804, then, the retaining walls of the old economic and political institutions disappeared. The next forty years were ones of experiment in stabilizing a new set of social institutions.[1] Efforts to make the new social structure efficient, orderly, progressive, all failed; by mid-century the undramatic and unconsciously exerted pressure of daily behavior on the part of hundreds of thousands of untutored Negroes gave Haitian institutions their new and recognizable character. The presidents thereafter rarely attempted serious reform in these institutions; on the contrary, they generally tried only to make use of them for their own personal benefit. The Haiti of 1860 was radically different from the Haiti of 1791–1804, while 1915 closely resembled 1860. Only since the Occupation by American Marines has the process of change begun to accelerate again.

Most adjustments arrived at by a whole society occur unconsciously. Great leaders may suggest new ways for a nation to follow which break with the past and are clearly more progressive and rational than the old ways, but it is the people who eventually accept or reject the novelty. They perform, as people always and continuously do, an act of unconscious, automatic selection upon the variations, eliminating this one and adopting that for reasons often apparently irrational or prejudiced. The result of such a steady process of selection is a recognizable group of folkways and mores which make Haitian culture, for instance, distinguishable from the culture of other near-by islands, Cuba or Jamaica, for example.

It is not always a great man who suggests a variation in the folkways and mores, nor yet even an important personage like a cabinet

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[1] The term "social institution" is here used to mean a consistent pattern of folkways and mores clustering about a fundamental human interest.

minister or an outstanding intellectual. Variations are frequently 175
(some even say generally) mere casual accidents, surprising inspira- 171
tions of the moment. The changes which have come over the face of [171]
the Vodun religion are examples: in almost no instance can the additions or emendations be traced back to their originators, yet Vodun is clearly different now from what it was in Boyer's time. Just as no one knows who initiates a change in the folkway of language, coining a slang phrase, modifying a pronunciation, so the makers of most variations in folkways and mores are anonymous.

Given infinite time and patience, one might compile a list of mores in any country, beginning first with those which require absolute conformity from all persons, and running down to those which express social ideals but which may nevertheless be honored in the breach. In our own country, the mores condemning incest and cannibalism are not only our rules but our unanimous practice; and if a person breaks either we punish him severely. At the other end of our list are those mores requiring truthfulness and honor. In calling these American mores we pay homage to an ideal—and then tell our white lies as a part of the observance of social amenities, or make our "shrewd" business deals in order to get on in the world. For neither of these breaches of the mores is there any concerted social punishment; on the contrary, we have been known to praise those who broke them. In describing the culture of a society, therefore, it is necessary to report both the mores as ideal and the mores as practice.

The larger and more complex a society becomes, the fewer the 184
mores shared in common by all members of that society. In a small colonial American village, isolated from much contact with strangers, the whole population was bound by scores of mores touching all phases of life. In modern America, on the contrary, if one should consider American society as a whole it would probably be difficult to find a dozen mores shared commonly by us all, or if shared, exerting the same force to conformity. We have had to develop a measure of tolerance with our 130 million neighbors, a live-and-let-live principle which has been aptly called "antagonistic coöperation."

Each district in Haiti, in the effective isolation of illiteracy and sedentary life, has developed its own characteristic mores, of which a limited number correspond with those of other Haitian districts. It is these general correspondences which have been treated in this book. Within each district, likewise, there is the usual hierarchy of rules